

LARKANA TO PEKING

MAHMUD SHAM

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(SOME TRAVELS WITH MR. BHUTTO)

By

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PREFACE

This is the tale of a long night of suffering. This is the story of tortuous dictatorships. This is a narrative of the woes of 120 million people. This is the chapter belonging to that period of our national history when we were smeared in the eyes of the world—and our country vivisected.

Things appear on the ocean of time like waves and then disappear. Knowledge of these things and their disappearance breeds despair. As a journalist, it has been my duty to see, analyse, realize and pass on that reality to the reader; but this process becomes a constant crucifixion also. You can imagine the mental agony of a person who knows what is happening and what is going to happen but can only report helplessly. From 1968 to 1972, whatever happened (our history galloped through months in a period of days and jumped over centuries in a span of months) was watched from very close quarters.

Occasionally I myself was swept by the whirlwind of events. The fact that I was in the company of a person who is now the Prime Minister of our country is not in itself a thing to be proud of; the only pride that I know of is that I somehow was lucky to hear the beat of time with my own ears. As a journalist I can be proud of the fact that from March 1969 to December 1972, I was constantly within earshot of that West Pakistan politician who wrote the history of this period. I was with him. As a journalist. As a person.

In the burning deserts of Sind, in the wide open fields of Punjab and in the desolate hills of Baluchistan, when people with cracked faces, with stories of centuries of oppression and deprivation written large on them, gathered around him—on the roads, in the streets, in the fields and in public meetings—I could read every thought in

their minds. These faces, these hard faces, are still etched in my memory. ! distinctly remember those eyes in which hope had started kindling. In the light of those hopes, I wish to write part of our history. I made this a travelogue.

The journey in this book starts in March 1969. Even though this journey has been under way for many centuries, from the time when man was divided into high and low, into have and have-not and into the ruler and the ruled, I have studied the process of dust settling from a particular moment. From this particular moment, began the process of my own catharsis.

These chapters were written immediately after every journey was undertaken. This is neither a criticism nor a review of the things that happened. This is a "paper" on the events as they happened, as I saw them and as I felt them.

We are now passing through a new age, having gone through the difficult period. This is the story of the difficult period. I just wanted to put on record those events, those speeches and those slogans to reflect what was then being felt by millions of people. I am not sure, if in the annals of our political writings, such a "paper" was ever written. I am not interested either. With all the confidence and sincerity at my disposal, I took part in this struggle and with the same zeal I went on writing this in the weekly "AL FATAH" for historical reference.

Now that I look back and re-read my own writings, they reflect a nation whose political consciousness has touched its highest peak ever. A nation which knows the price of sacrifice for the value of Rights. A nation which was passing through a dark night struggling for the dawn of democracy. A nation which could differentiate right from wrong. Those were the days when every heart was burning with individual hatred and which was in itself a part of the general fire which wanted to reduce to ashes, the exploitation of the have-nots. This fire had engulfed Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan and NWFP. This was the beginning of the end of sufferings. I cannot forget those days even if I want to. It has fallen to my lot to write about it and I am proud of this luck. I am fully aware of the responsibility.

History has to take many more turns. It has to engulf the events of thousands of years to come, but our period will remain a turning point. I am translating those events into words.

History bestows upon some chosen people the right of judgement. It is always a challenge. Those who choose rightly, join the elevated college of immortals. Those who are reluctant or choose wrongly, are by-passed by time, trampled by historians and earn unceasing contempt of history and its people. It is because history like people is an objective and fair phenomenon. It never goes hand in hand with those who judge wrongly. People also follow a person only up to the point of correct leadership.

From June 1967 to December 1971, is one part of Mr. Bhutto's life. In this period, history has squeezed out of him what it wanted to. One aspect of his personality appeared and vanished with the time. Now there is another aspect of his personality before us. This is a totally different role. History is challenging him heartlessly from moment to moment. How long he can keep on accepting these challenges is premature to say. He is still in the process. In "Larkana To Peking" all chapters except the last one reflect the personality which has done its role and about whom both the people and history have given their verdict. I am not suggesting this because I wrote it all but because the fate of every citizen of Pakistan is bound unceasingly with this period. My own words are very few in this book. Hence every word in this book is important. These words were uttered either by the people or by the man, around whom the people had flocked. The people and Bhutto are the history of this period.

I am not theorizing that the period we went through and the period we are passing through are two different entities. As a matter of fact, whatever we have sowed shall now be reaped. It is imperative, therefore, that we keep a record. As I said earlier, the second role of Mr. Bhutto has come into being. What shape will events take because of his class character, his class associations, national and international contradictions, pressures of time, in the light of personal and national demands?

He did initiate and lead a mass movement but he came to power through elections. This rules out the total revolution. His class character and international obligations are also clinging to his coat-tails; but in the last three years the consciousness and awareness that he created in the downtrodden masses, even though through the spoken word only, is in itself an historical feat. People have become so conscious now that they will not stop short of their rights even if this Government wanted to stop them. The tide of public awareness which was created by Mr. Bhutto has not abated and probably shall not. Even though history will not forget this contribution of Mr. Bhutto, yet the class character of Mr. Bhutto will be a liability. He has the ambition to lead the Third World. Will this ambition overrule his class character or get overruled? Let us wait and see.

The fate of the Third World is linked inescapably with a socialist economy. Sooner or later a mass revolution has to come. If there is an effort to block this revolution or if the socialist economy is not implemented, then things will change in a different way. Mr. Bhutto who has his fingers on the pulse of time and who enjoys a "sense of timing", is surely listening to the footsteps of the oncoming revolution.

In conclusion I would like to acknowledge the help rendered by my friends and journalist colleagues Farooq Moin, Irshad Hussain Kazimi and Iqbal Mir, in translating the original which has appeared in Urdu under the title "Larkana Se Peking Tak."

Mahmud Sham

Waiting for Bhutto

This is the Karachi Cantonment Railway Station. There is a vast multitude. A decorated truck stands amidst the crowds. Countless youth are seen carrying banners. Ayub Khan's downfall is imminent. There are surging crowds on the platform, over the railway bridge, everywhere. The Bolan Mail carrying Mr. Bhutto is about to arrive. He is visiting Karachi for the first time after his release from imprisonment and his subsequent detention at his Larkana home. Karachi Town is bursting with enthusiasm to accord a rousing welcome to its leader. The movement he launched from Peshawar, three to four months ago, has spread far and wide and gained tremendous momentum. Mr. Bhutto was arrested in Lahore for starting a people's movement, against dictatorship, in Peshawar, Dera Ismail Khan, Nowshera, Rawalpindi and other towns. Youths belonging to the National Students Federation and the People's Party are spread far and near. Mr. Bhutto wades through the crowd and emerges on the road. He is accompanied by his jail companion, Mir Rasul Bakhsh Talpur. Many of his prison associates have not yet been released. He climbs up the truck and is seen waving to the people. He takes pride in the fact that he went to jail fighting for the people's cause, and has now been released under their pressure. He is happy to come back to them. Hundreds of thousands of oppressed labourers, destitute men, frustrated students have come out on the streets of Karachi, full of determination to break the shackles of dictatorship. The caravan marches on. We are approaching a hotel, owned by one of Ayub Khan's friends. The people rush forward to loot it and set it on fire, but the danger is averted. A few citizens have gone on a hunger-strike at Empress Market to perpetuate Ayub's dictatorial rule. Stones are being hurled at Mr. Bhutto's supporters. There are acts of arson. The organisers of the procession wish to change its route. But a loud voice is heard over the general din: "No, I shall walk through the flames." He has gone through such fire before. The fire is spreading out to the

entire country. It is hard to control this fire. It has engulfed the stronghold of dictatorship. Only the face changes. It's Yahya now, in place of Ayub.

I am sitting at No. 70—Clifton. This is my first face-to-face meeting with Mr. Bhutto. The conversation proceeds apace—on matters economic and political; on solidarity between the two Wings of the country; on problems facing the students. Mr. Bhutto asserts: "The country's capitalist rich are becoming richer still and in no sense behind the richest capitalists of any developed country in the world. As against them, our poor people are far behind even the most under-developed nations of Africa and Asia."

This voice resounds in Multan, Dera Ismail Khan and in Peshawar. Then, there is firing in Sanghar. Some persons rush out of their hide-outs in the neighbouring trees and elsewhere, with guns in their hands. Firing continues. Clouds of dust rise into the atmosphere. Mr. Bhutto comes out of his car and says: "I am Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Come, fire at me. Yes, I am Bhutto" Nur Muhammad, his trusted man, manages to throw Mr. Bhutto on the ground and lies over him to save him from bullets. This tumult also subsides.

January 2, 1970. Freedom of political activities has been declared. Mr. Bhutto is today going to introduce my book "Cardio-spasm", containing a rather longish poem of the same name, at the Karachi Press Club. The Club is full of journalists, intellectuals and political workers. Malik Ghulam Mustafa Khar drives Mr. Bhutto to the Press Club. On arrival, he declaims: "Cardio-spasm". Such books need urgently to be written. We must take up pen against all manner of exploitation. It is the exploiters who have ruined our society." Mr. Bhutto also announces that his first public meeting will take place in Karachi on January 4, to be followed by another in Rawalpindi on January 11. He proudly says: "Public meetings have already begun. Alongside of them, there is a general awakening. Hatred is being generated against the present system among the people from the platforms of election meetings, which has, for years, held them in bondage."

Hala Conference

This is Hala, the country seat of Makhdoom Muhammad Zaman Talibul Maula, the land of the poor Haris. People all over the country had been eagerly looking forward to the dawn of July 1, 1970, the day on which an important decision to break up One Unit was to take practical shape, and the Pakistan People's Party had to take a vital decision at a conference in Hala, whether it should take part in the forthcoming general election. Both of these decisions had a close link with the people's collective upsurge. While the citizens, labourers, peasants and students, at large, had carried on their concerted effort against One Unit, the country's oppressed masses had, under the banner of the Pakistan People's Party, toppled Ayub's dictatorial regime.

At sunrise on July 1, 1970, the people held nation-wide festivities to mark the dissolution of One Unit. The same day, began the Hala Conference of the Pakistan People's Party.

How far the PPP had fulfilled the common man's aspirations could be well assessed from the decisions taken at the conference, namely, PPP's agreement upon participation in the election; establishment of the People's Guard; the demand that Ministers resign two months before the election and the Assemblies enjoy sovereignty, etc.

There was some talk about whether the decision to participate in the polls would subsequently enable the Assemblies to solve the people's problems. But there was no particular disagreement on this point among the delegates attending the conference. The young leaders—Mairaj Mohammad Khan, Tariq Aziz, Dr. Shamim Zainuddin Khan—and others were agreed that the Party should not boycott the election, and should, at the same time, make it a point to warn the people through electioneering platforms that elections alone would not help solve the problems created by the high-handedness of the country's twenty-two monopoly-holding capitalists, *waderas*, jagirdars and bureaucrats. It had to be brought home to the people

that such farces were usually enacted under a capitalistic system in order to keep up appearances, and that they should, therefore, remain constantly on the alert against such deceit. The people would have to be perpetually reminded that they should at no time relax their effort to end the *jagirdari* system; they should rather intensify their battle against the injustices of monopolists, capitalists and bureaucrats, for, the people's problems were never solved by parliaments alone.

Among other delegates, Sahibzada Ahmad Raza Kasuri, Badiul Hasan Zaidi, Mr. Haq Nawaz of Gandapur, Dr. Mubashir Hasan, Mr. Nisar Muhammad Khan, Mian Gul Qadiri, Mr. Haq Gharib Nawaz, Mr. J.A. Rahim, Mr. Wali Ilahi, Mr. Saifur Rahman Kiani, Mian Muhammad Afzal, Malik Meraj Khalid, Maulana Abdul Haq Rabbani, Sahibzada Farooq, Mr. Zakaullah Lodhi, Sheikh Mohammad Rasheed, Major-General (retired) Mohammad Akbar Khan, Mr. Abdul Hafeez Pirzada Mr. Hayat Mohammad Khan Sherpao and Mir Rasul Bakhsh Talpur also expressed their views on the subject. Ninety-nine per cent of them held that the PPP must take part in the election, but it should not compromise its 'awami' plank. They emphasised that the Party should establish still wider contacts with workers, peasants and students during the election campaign and make the PPP a real people's party.

A voice rings clear: "We are not going to the polls in quest of power. The PPP has committed itself to carry on its struggle to solve the people's problems, both inside the Assemblies, and outside. If Party workers pursue a right course, vis-a-vis elections, the polls will not prove harmful. If, instead of seeking office after the elections, we maintain our contact with the people and play the role of the Opposition inside and outside the Assemblies, the results will be gratifying indeed. I assure you I don't want Ministerial office. I will make sure that people don't get an opportunity of saying: "Bhutto has let us down.' Rest assured, I'll never earn the people's disfavour."

Soekarno Passes Away

Dr. Ahmed Soekarno—a great Asian leader and a great friend of Pakistan—who ranked with Gamal Abdel Nasser and Ben Bella, passed away in June, 1970. Soekarno and Bhutto were close friends. I had been wanting to talk to Mr. Bhutto about the death of this great friend of Pakistan, but he was busy travelling, now in Lahore, now in Multan. Finally, an opportunity offered, and when we got down to talking, the conversation went on and on.

Mr. Bhutto began by saying: "The Indonesian nation is quiet for the time being. Indonesians had no hand in the conspiracy against Soekarno. It wasn't the people's revolt. They hadn't come out on the streets seeking redress of their economic grievances. This was a foreign conspiracy, in which America has apparently come out successful. But all such events have only intensified the Afro-Asian people's hatred of America, because America has tried to hurt the Indonesian people's national sentiments. They will be spurred on by this blow and gain victory again, one day."

A comrade, a close friend and a fellow-traveller of Soekarno's on the road to people's democracy that the PPP Chairman Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was, he was piecing together his memories and impressions of the downfall of the dear departed. Mr. Bhutto had watched Bapak Soekarno at close quarters, both when he was at the height of his power and at the time of his decline and fall. We were keen to learn from Mr. Bhutto the details of the conspiracy against Soekarno. To which Mr. Bhutto's reply was: "Although the 'full story' is not yet out, there are certain glaring factors, but for which no one could have removed Soekarno—Soekarno who won independence for his country; raised the morale and self-confidence of his people and gave them one single language; who regained the lost paradise of West Irian and proved his unique courage and diplomatic skill. In the

circumstances, the people's protest against such a great leader is, therefore, incomprehensible. As for the police, the army and the administration, well, Soekarno had full control over them. It is said that things came to such a pass because the economic condition of Indonesia was poor. I had a long talk with Soekarno on this matter. And he told me that it was wrong to say that he had been paying no attention to his country's economy. It is possible that he may not have given it full priority, he added, and if so, it was because he had been concentrating on his nation's overall development which he wanted to found on social justice, equality and national sentiments. He referred to India in this connection and said he had heard that considerable progress was going on there also. But do you call it progress, he asked, if one project is planned and another fizzles out? He said that Indian policies were based on Brahmanism, considerations of caste and creed, and social hatred. Of course, he added, one would see chimneys belching out clouds of smoke, but the economic base would remain unsound, and worries go on mounting."

Soekarno had told Mr. Bhutto: "Soon after, I secured women's emancipation. I made sure that Indonesians were imbued with national spirit. I had to counteract numerous foreign conspiracies. It is, therefore, wrong to say that I have paid no attention to Indonesia's economy. I had thought that economic stability would be achieved gradually and, in any case, anyone could do this job. But it wasn't given to everybody to weld the people of three thousand islands into one nation, and to introduce one national language. Soekarno would not be there for all times to perform this task of national integration. Even otherwise, Indonesia is the richest Asian country in the matter of natural resources. We have rubber, oil, tin in abundance. The necessary foundation has been laid; so, things should no longer be difficult. And don't forget, we have to have a large army. Our navy is the strongest in the whole of Asia. Granted that we are suffering from inflation, but this is due to foreign conspiracies. However, I take pride in the fact that people don't die of starvation in my country, whereas they do even in countries which boast of great development."

Giving his comments on the Indonesian situation, Mr. Bhutto said: "If the Indonesians had faced an economic crisis, they could have surely come out on the streets like the French, but nothing of the sort happened in Indonesia. But why cite the French precedent?

Why not take the case of Pakistan? The demonstrations that took place during the days of Ayub Khan, were directly inspired by common discontent. The masses had revolted on account of economic hardship. That's why Ayub Khan had to bend to their will eventually. But the Indonesian demonstrations were confined to Jakarta. The army was solidly behind Soekarno. A foreign Power was, in fact, involved. It is a Power that is in the habit of interfering in the internal affairs of every country. After World War II, this Power has broken in upon the affairs of every country of Latin America, Africa and Asia. Soekarno's policies militated against the imperial interests of this Power. It can be said with full authority that China had absolutely no hand in the upheaval. The China policy was in favour of Soekarno. Even a Communist government couldn't achieve what Soekarno could as Head of a nationalist leadership. China could, therefore, claim that she maintained friendly relations not only with Communist countries but also with non-Communist nations on the basis of principles. Soekarno's nationalist regime, in fact, suited China. He gave the greatest importance to China, because friendship with her served the national interests of Indonesia."

"How is it, Sir, that despite all this, Soekarno failed to control the disturbances?" I asked Mr. Bhutto. He replied: "The fact of the matter is that the situation was created by the intrigues of foreign Powers and the opportunism of a handful of persons in the Indonesian Army."

Talking of America's involvement in the matter, Mr. Bhutto disclosed: "At that time, the USA sent Howard Green as her ambassador to Indonesia. He had spent several years in Hong Kong where he was in charge of the American Secret Service which used to take stock of the information, collected by American spies, on China and Indonesia and the neighbouring countries, and prepared reports for the CIA. Soekarno did not at all approve of Howard Green's appointment. He had expressed to me his disapproval. When I went to see him in April, 1966, he told me that Green's appointment was detrimental to his country's interests and that he had, in fact, written to the American Government to recall Green. Because, he said, Green was a CIA expert and would surely spread disaffection in Indonesia."

Mr. Bhutto said: "Soekarno's apprehensions turned out to be true. Later, we also got proof of the purpose behind Howard Green's

appointment in Indonesia: Mr. Qudratullah Shahab, who was then our Ambassador in Holland, sent us a secret letter two or three weeks after the Indonesian revolt. If this letter had been received three or four weeks before the uprising, it would have proved to be one of those historic documents that change the course of world events. Shahab didn't attach much importance to the intrigue when he first learnt of it. But when events took a serious turn, he realised the gravity of the situation. We received the letter three weeks after the rebellion. Shahab had written to say that he had a Dutch friend in Holland and that they had together gone through an Intelligence Course in America and had remained good friends ever since then. This Dutch friend had disclosed to Shahab, during the course of a conversation, that Soekarno's downfall was imminent and that it would be seen how cleverly Soekarno was toppled. The blow would be so severe that Indonesia would not be able to recover from it. Apparently, the disturbances would be laid at Soekarno's door and the people would turn against him. The real object was to remove Soekarno. It's a pity that Shahab supplied this information much too late. Had we received the letter earlier, we could have informed Soekarno of the conspiracy in good time. This letter lies in the record of the Foreign Office, but, alas! it has no longer the importance it once had."

During conversation, the name of that 'wonderful' figure, Nawabzada Sher Ali, was also mentioned and this made Mr. Bhutto remark: "Yes, Nawabzada Sahib was very fond of writing letters. He often wrote to me, lavishing praise on me as a statesman and a gifted Foreign Minister, and saying that Pakistan had never had the like of me. Well, this was kind of him. He was then in Belgrade and kept on sending me communications that the situation in Malaysia and Indonesia was bound to change and that we shall have to revise our policy."

I asked: "Shall we infer that Nawabzada Sher Ali knew beforehand what was going to happen?"

"Might have."

"When did he go over to Indonesia as Pakistan's Ambassador?"

"His appointment was wangled in the last days of my Ministership. He went to Indonesia a week or two after I vacated office. Those were critical days for Indonesia."

I asked Mr. Bhutto what kind of role the political parties of

Indonesia had been playing, and he told me: "The Communist Party of Indonesia had the largest membership, with Mr. Aidit at the head. He whole-heartedly co-operated with Soekarno and didn't betray him at any stage. The Nationalist Party was Soekarno's own. The Masjumi Party could be called the Ikhwan-ul-Muslimoon or the Jamaat-i-Islami of Indonesia, and Soekarno had once even banned it. I have a feeling that it was involved in the conspiracy, and the events that took place give credence to the view that the Masjumi Party also had a hand in the CIA intrigue, but I have no documentary proof of this."

I asked Mr. Bhutto what had passed between him and Soekarno at their last meeting and his reply was: "I met Soekarno last in April, 1966. He told me that he had sent me three telegrams and communication through the Indonesian Ambassador in Pakistan and our Ambassador in Indonesia, but he felt sorry that these messages had been stopped from reaching me. Soekarno said: 'After the disturbances started in Indonesia, Pakistan was no longer in a position to do anything. You had good relations with China and a sort of understanding also existed between you and America, but we succeeded in contacting you very late. The conspiracy against me was carried out on a large scale. Nevertheless, I am determined to serve the Indonesian nation as long as I live. I have had no hand in the killings of the Generals and others. How could I, who made this country, ever think of creating chaos and confusion? Well, all that now belongs to the past'. Soekarno, again and again, regretted that I had reached him too late. Now, how could I tell him that I had been kept from going over?"

The man who had been restraining Mr. Bhutto from going to Indonesia, was also among the most interesting personalities of Pakistan's history. So I naturally wanted to find out from Mr. Bhutto how Ayub Khan felt at the time of Soekarno's fall. And this is what Bhutto said:

"Ayub Khan had become very panicky at Soekarno's downfall. Two events had, in fact, frightened him most: The overthrow of Ben Bella in June, 1965, and the falling through of the Afro-Asian conference; and Soekarno's downfall, the latter being a deadly shock. Ayub Khan didn't register his reactions to this tragedy in any clear terms; he only gave his impressions in rather ambiguous words. He had come to feel that it was not possible to encounter America for

securing Pakistan's rights, but it wasn't so. Had Ayub Khan backed the people and won their respect, he could still have challenged any Power, however big. The people had all along been on the side of Soekarno, but his failing was that he had begun overestimating everything. He had started believing that no conspiracy could now succeed against him. What is more, his trips abroad were now on the increase. The result was that conspiracies against him went on mounting. The conspirators were not drawn from the people, but consisted of some army personnel and a handful of political opportunists. When I met Soekarno in Cairo after the 1965 Afro-Asian Conference had failed to be convened, I told him that although he enjoyed nationwide support and was held in high esteem by Indonesia's masses, the fact remained that whenever he went abroad, a conspiracy of one kind or another started brewing in his country. It is true that he was obliged to undertake foreign trips every now and again, because he had to undergo treatment for his perpetual kidney complaint. But it was always during his absence that Indonesian traitors and his enemies felt free to hatch conspiracies. At that meeting, too Soekarno told me that he was master of the situation. There would be conspiracies, of course, but none would dare plot against him, he felt sure."

I broke in: "Sir, an independent and strong movement, led by Ben Bella, Nasser, Soekarno, yourself and one or two other world figures, had taken birth in Afro-Asia in 1964-65. But most of these leaders have fallen. Would you throw some light on the causes of their downfall?" Mr. Bhutto picked up the threads:" Granted that these personalities have been removed from the scene, but their ideologies and their spirit will endure. There is going to be a strong reaction. It was an unnatural act. The real leaders were ousted and their place was taken by buffoons and puppets. The last act of the farce will prove extremely dangerous to imperialism. Wait for a year or two. No such conspiracies can flourish after 1975. We shouldn't consider the results of the struggle at the moment. We should rather have a long-range view of things, keep our eyes fixed on the final and irrevocable outcome of the struggle. Seemingly, America has won. But the truth of the matter is that she has met with defeat everywhere. She has injured national sentiments in every land. This has lent intensity to the people's hatred of America. What is more, the buffoons and puppets that took the stage kept

passing themselves off as leaders. America remained prisoner of the magic of their personalities, but she is now disillusioned and says that they are of no use to her; they have served none of her purposes."

I asked Mr. Bhutto what alternative Soekarno had to the United Nations when he quitted the organisation. Mr. Bhutto said: "Indonesia's dissociation from the World Body was a measure, purely after the fashion of Soekarno. He had taken a bold step indeed. He wanted to found a people's United Nations. In fact, even the construction of a Conference Hall in Jakarta had been taken in hand, and the work had been entrusted to Chinese experts. Soekarno had charged the U.N. with having failed to solve the problems of the small countries of Afro-Asia and Latin America, and said that these countries should have an organisation of their own. Many countries supported the idea, although it was exclusively the brain-child of Soekarno. If he had remained in power, he would certainly have succeeded in forming such an organisation. The second Afro-Asian Conference was to take a decision in this regard, but imperialist Powers prevented the holding of the Conference."

I then remarked: "Nevertheless, Soekarno was ousted. What lesson should other Afro-Asian Heads of State draw from his downfall?" Mr. Bhutto replied that there should be constant and close contact between the Heads and their people. They should also always remain on the alert, should have full control over the Armed Forces and be wary of external intrigues."

"And now, Sir, will you throw some light on Soekarno's private life also?"

No sooner had I completed my sentence than I noticed the lustre of tears in Mr. Bhutto's eyes. He went on: "President Soekarno was a great friend of friends. His memory was tremendous, and he had great stamina for work. He would go to his desk at 6 or 7 a.m. and continue working till well past midnight. He never showed any signs of fatigue even after putting in 18 to 19 hours a day. He was saturated with world history. At one time, he had great respect for India, but after the Sino-Indian conflict, he realised that he had had mistaken notions of India, and he said this in so many words, adding that he had been holding the wrong idea that India was an influential country.

"He was a very sensitive soul, God bless him! He always respected

the sentiments of all those he had to deal with. He never thrust on them his own ideas. I once asked him why he avoided any mention of his country's problems. To which he replied: Every country has itself to handle its problems eventually, however, much external assistance it might receive. President Soekarno was a fine artist. While waiting for his meal to be served, he would keep drawing sketches, now of any bandung, now of birds. He had a sweet temper and it was pure delight to listen to him."

I asked Mr. Bhutto how Soekarno addressed him. "He called me Zulfikar." "And how did you address him?" "I always addressed him as President, Sir. He once told me that his people called him 'Bapak' and 'Bungkarno', and asked me to address him similarly. "Whereupon I said: "You are very kind. I look up to you as my elder brother and hold you in high esteem. When he decorated me with the Star of Indonesia, he was expressing his deep affection for me. I still remember his loving glance. It needs days and days to record one's pleasant memories of him. I have in my possession, scattered here and there, some of his rare photographs and letters. When I have the leisure, I shall bring them together for you to see. Soekarno was a very great man, a very great friend. Afro-Asia, particularly Pakistan, remains under a great obligation to him."

Memories of the September War

At another meeting with Mr. Bhutto, the subject of conversation was the meeting of Opposition leaders with Ayub Khan during the September War. Mr. Bhutto told me: "I was in New York when the leaders met Ayub Khan after the cease-fire, but I did attend the parleys that took place after the war broke out. The Opposition leaders had made repeated requests for a meeting. When they arrived for the meeting, they looked terribly upset; so did the host. Chaudhri Mohammed Ali and Maulana Maudoodi were the most nervous, and asked again and again: 'Mr. President, Sir! What'll happen now?'

I asked Mr. Bhutto whether Ayub Khan had sought the leaders' advice at that critical juncture, and he replied: "The question of advice didn't arise. They were talking to him as if he was a great leader and they were his underlings. They went on sirring Ayub Khan and showering praise on him, and couldn't say anything worthwhile. As I have told you before, Ayub Khan and the Opposition leaders were both jittery. Now, tell me what marvel of achievement did the Opposition leaders work in those days? The people of Pakistan had, no doubt, formed themselves into a second line of defence behind our spirited soldiers, but I ask you: Were these leaders seen at any time moving among the masses?"

I asked Mr. Bhutto if it was true that President Johnson had held out some threat to Ayub Khan by telephone. He broke into a laugh and remarked: "On the contrary, Ayub Khan had himself established contact with the American President. I failed to understand why Ayub Khan should have been out of heart. He should have actually been in high spirits over the unique performance of the Pakistan Armed Forces. After the fall of Khem Karan, he was even more demoralised. We did our best to buck him up. It was then that he called a Press conference, which was mostly attended by foreign

journalists. Ayub Khan was as before feeling out of spirits, and we couldn't make sense of what he was saying. I wonder if the Pakistani journalists noticed that I had left the Press conference in disgust. Subsequently, I had a word with Ayub Khan and told him that if he had felt nervous, he could have very well asked me to talk to the journalists on his behalf, rather than say confused things. He then told me to go and censor the dispatches of foreign journalists and make sure that nothing unfavourable got through. Consequently, I went over and censored the reports. The foreign journalists had gone so far as to say that they had been under the impression that Pakistan had been scoring victories but, after watching Ayub's nervous condition during the Press conference, they wondered whether they had not been receiving wrong intimation."

I asked Mr. Bhutto what he was doing when the news of the Indian attack was received. He said: "I was working in my office. I had been expecting the attack and there were good reasons for doing so. Ayub Khan was then sleeping. Brigadier Rafi telephoned me to say that Lahore had been attacked and asked me to rush to the President, and I went to him straight away. Some people say that the Foreign Office had given the assurance that India would not violate the international border. I ask: What is meant by the Foreign Office? I had personally given no such assurance. On the contrary, I had been giving warning that the attack was imminent. I want to know which Foreign Office man had held out the assurance that India would not attack Pakistan. Anyway, who is competent to give such an assurance except the Foreign Minister or the Foreign Secretary?"

Lastly, we talked of Mr. Bhutto's visit to China. Someone had at that time said in his book that it was not Mr. Bhutto but Asghar Khan who had been sent to China. The author had tried to prove that Mr. Bhutto had played no particular role in bringing about Pakistan-China friendship. The author in question had been writing articles in a Press Trust newspaper during Ayub Khan's days at the instance of the Government. And now this book had been brought out right at the time of the general election to boost the reactionary Rightist parties. In this connection, Mr. Bhutto said:

"When I went to attend the United Nations session, Ayub Khan kept on ringing me up to say: "You come back. We have to go to meet our friends." When I asked which friends, he said it would not be discreet to specify them by telephone. Finally, he told me that

our friends in the North had been inviting us to go over, and I got some idea of the friends he had in mind. And when I returned to Pakistan, I learnt that Mr. Chou En-lai had been sending messages saying that he wanted to meet us. Ayub Khan didn't want to go to China without me. Asghar Khan had accompanied us in the capacity of a pilot. He was then the PIA's chief. He was no political leader, nor was he on active service then. Nor did he have any relations with China; so, his going with us had no importance. He had gone to Tashkent also in the capacity of the PIA's chief, and it was he who served 'kababs' during the dinner given by Pakistan. Whoever is the PIA chief has similar functions to perform during foreign tours. If Asghar Khan went to China in some other capacity, then he should divulge the secret of his journey."

Mr. Bhutto continued: "I would suggest that these worthy leaders should not distort facts. The people are well aware of each page of our history. It is not possible to win election victories by fabricating stories. We owe a debt to the martyrs of the September War and Kashmir. Pakistan will remain incomplete without Kashmir. Our martyrs shed their blood during the September War on this very issue, and their sacrifice will not prove in vain. The USA, the USSR and India have hatched a conspiracy to divert our people's attention from the realities of our situation. The reactionary leaders of the Right-wing parties are also dancing to the tune of this 'Axis'. But our people will foil all such conspiracies."

Be Prepared for Sacrifice

This journey begins at Malir city, Karachi. In fact, this journey has been in progress ever since the haves started trampling the rights of the have-nots. This travel forms only an insignificant part of the unending journey. Mr. Bhutto is riding in a truck. He is wearing snuff-colour shirt-sleeves. He is heading for old age and his hair has turned grey. He looks tired, but his eyes and broad forehead reflect strong determination. He is endorsing the sentiments of the deprived and oppressed people. His truck is followed by other trucks, jeeps, carts, camel-carriages, bicycles and scooters. The roads are narrow and packed with large crowds. Aged mothers have come out of their mud houses and their gaze is fixed on the truck. They are waving Mr. Bhutto a greeting. They are spontaneously praying: "Long live Bhutto!" They don't know who Bhutto is, but they do know what he wants. That's why they are praying for the success of their sons' mission. After passing through villages and fields, the procession has reached Memon Goth. There is a mound of sand right in front which forms a natural stage. The people are swarming round the foot of the mound. They are raising slogans like "Long live Bhutto; release Mairaj; we will vanquish our adversaries and bring about Socialism." The thousands of people who have gathered in this wasteland of Memon Goth, are the oppressed ones of God's earth. They are enduring the scorching heat in hopes of better days. In fact, they have been consoling themselves with the mirage of empty promises under such hot sun for twenty-three years. The following words ring in the wild growth and all over the sandmound in the trying heat, and are being registered on the minds of the audience:

"We are against violence, but we are not afraid of making sacrifices. The Press Trust which once flattered Ayub Khan, is now singing the praises of reactionary leaders. During the last five thousand

years, we have witnessed the rule of Hindus, Mughals, Afghans, the British, Sikhs and Generals, but we have never had an 'Awami Raj'. An 'Awami Raj' is now imminent and no one can stop it coming. If the political prisoners are not released, it will have far-reaching consequences. My own arrest is quite likely, but I am prepared to make any sacrifice. All of you should also pledge your word to make every sacrifice for the sake of your country, for the sake of the common man."

The entire crowd has now stood up. The faces of the people are aglow with their inner passion. These glowing faces and the raised hands are the real asset of Pakistan. Light is about to come out of these very eyes, now blinking in the hot sun. The faces of the crowds are now all crimson, whether they belong to Karachi or Hyderabad. Their hands are symbols of firm resolves. There stands a large crowd in Effendi Bagh, Hyderabad, also, 120 miles from Memon Goth, Karachi. Earlier, it was a scorching day; now, it is a dark night. Then, there were thousands of people. Now their number runs into lakhs. Here, too, the people—the repository of all power—undertake to make all sacrifices. A gathering of three to four lakh people is standing up. Their faces are flushed and their strong hands signify rock-like determination. A voice is now heard over the audience's murmur: "You are raising your hands under the stress of emotion. First, think, and then make a commitment." There is a brief pause after which the faces of the crowd express the same iron will. The people have risen, and no one can now withstand them. A voice comes from the stage: "Will you people swear by the 'Kalima' to honour your pledge?" The whole multitude swears by the 'Kalima.' The same voice again comes from the stage: "O, Supreme Being! stand witness that this nation has willingly undertaken to make sacrifices. The common people sleep when they sleep, but when they wake up, nobody can challenge them. Now, if there is any more firing, any more bloodshed, I can tell the powers that be with confidence that their Solomon Throne will vanish into thin air." Now, a new comer to politics is under discussion. It is the self-same person who refused in the beginning to oppose Ayub's dictatorship and subsequently said that he would enter the field of politics when Ayub's downfall became imminent. And only recently, he asserted that he had entered politics to forestall Bhutto, who, he alleged, wanted to come to power through the back door. A solitary voice again rises:

"I don't believe in back-door tactics. It is you who resort to back door. I believe in front-door entries. If I had been hungry for power, I would not have formed the Pakistan People's Party, I would not have launched the poor men's struggle. I would have, instead, sided with the 'seths', the capitalists. I wouldn't have followed the longer of the two paths. I would have backed the waderas. I woudn't have started a campaign against them. I have adopted the people's path—the path of tonga and rickshaw drivers, of the toiling masses and the poor. You cannot resist Bhutto. Bhutto is not a lone figure. He has with him the country's people—the labourers and peasants. You cannot withstand them. You cannot, as the agents of America and India, frustrate the people's gigantic movement. If you oppose me, you will be denying the people their legitimate rights, you will be perpetuating exploitation. I represent the people, I am the people's voice. I wish to make it clear that mere elections would achieve nothing. It wasn't the elections that defeated dictatorship but the people's struggle and sacrifices that overthrew it. A nation that shirks struggle and sacrifice can never achieve independence. If the powers that be propose to send us to jail, we are not afraid of captivity. If we are sent to jail, we will not apologise to the authorities to seek release. We are even prepared to face firing. At the moment, most of the political detenus belong to the Pakistan People's Party. Mairaj Mohammad Khan, my companion and comrade! You are not afraid of imprisonment. I am truly proud of you. But what kind of fair elections will these be when our co-workers are in jail? I have no use for such elections. My children and young men are being subjected to savage treatment in the country's jails. You call this impartiality? The "Zindgi" carries a most dirty article against me, but no action is taken against the journal. As against this, warnings are issued to the "Musawat", the "Combat" and "Al-Fath", if they publish even a single line in my favour. You say: 'Martial Law has entered its fourth phase.' Well, the People's Party has also entered its fourth phase. Did we win independence to suffer infinitely? People elsewhere enjoy comfort after independence. Has Allah ordained that misery should for ever be the lot of the people of Pakistan? No, this is not the Divine Will. We'll fight the twenty-two families. We'll take over all banks, nationalise all insurance companies."

It is 1-30 after midnight. The people are, indeed, eager to listen to Mr. Bhutto who is in the mood to address the audience.

But this journey doesn't end here. This march has to go on. Mr. Bhutto has many fellow-travellers. For instance, here is Rasul Bakhsh Talpur who has presented a commentary on the Holy Quran, published in 1385 A.H., wherein Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi has used the term—Islami Socialism. Here is Ali Ahmad Talpur who is calling down the rulers of the day: "You had said that Bhutto's party convention included only drivers of rickshaws and tongas. Our 'dear' rulers! Your Field-Marshal has taken to his heels. Your Governor has also packed up. The rickshawallas and tongawallas are right here. O' rulers! you have been defeated and the drivers of rickshaws have come out victorious. The rickshawallas and tongawallas have won, because they are the real fountain-head of power. The fountain-head of this power extends to Karachi, Hyderabad and other cities and the countryside."

The caravan is now heading towards Tando Muhammad Khan where people from neighbouring villages have turned up in large numbers. Conversation on all manner of subjects has gone on until six o'clock in the morning and the poeple have now dozed off, and get up again only two hours later. This cavalcade of jeeps and motor-cars is now going to visit the rain-afflicted areas, where rains have caused great havoc. The cavalcade makes a halt at the shrine of Sain Mian Abdul Karim. His 'Sajjada-Nashin' (the present spiritual leader, Mian Muhammad Ishaq) had voluntarily gone into virtual retirement, was living the life of a recluse, and had not come out of his seclusion. But today, Mian Muhammad Ishaq's votaries are amazed that he has gone up to Bhutto's car to bid him farewell. Mr. Bhutto's face is flushed with a beam of delight on it. Before Mr. Bhutto visited the shrine, there was a large gathering at the dam of River Indus. He addressed it and made it conscious of its rights. When Bhutto returned from the shrine at noon, people from far-flung villages had gathered on his route to greet him. Bhutto had a good chat with them. Now, the caravan is marching on the canal bank. We have to make a halt now and again. I have never been to these regions before, but I am aware of the condition of the people's life. They are the exploited ones, who have been robbed of the rewards of their labour. Unhappy faces are all alike. Hardship has only one shade of colour. Mir Ijaz Ali Talpur is contesting the election from this area. On his way, Zulfikar Ali keeps on canvassing for Mir Sahib. We reached Goldarji after Bhutto had addressed audiences at eight or ten places.

Goldarji has been severely hit by the rains. The crops have been destroyed. Here, Bhutto expresses his grief that the Government has not so far come to the rescue of the rain-affected people. He says that Sindhis and Muhajirs have, one and all, been affected by the flood. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the Government to render succour to all the needy. After stopping at one or two places, the caravan has reached Badin, which had received 22 inches of rain in one night. The whole expanse presented a spectacle of the Deluge. We stopped for a while at Badin. The Badin party workers had arranged a tea-party for the procession, but who had the time for tea! So, the march continued, and so many people had collected that it was difficult to come out of the crowd. Here, too, it was reiterated that the Pakistan People's Party was the people's only party and that it would keep up the struggle to secure their rights. The heat is scorching, there are storms of sand and dust, but the procession is moving forward. A layer of dust is clearly visible on the faces of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Mir Rasul Bakhsh Talpur, Makhdoom Talib-ul-Maula, Mir Ijaz Ali Talpur, Pir Ghulam Rasul Shah, Hakim Ali Zardari, Kamal Azfar and other Party workers. The Party workers are nameless people, but it is these very people who are the life and soul of any political movement, and, sometimes, even lay down their lives for the cause of their party. Having seen these dust-laden faces, I am brooding over many things. Suddenly, a jeep comes to a halt with a jolt. Right in front, a jeep has turned turtle. The wounded are crying on the road on account of pain. Their heads have received severe injuries and blood is flowing from their mouths. Their legs are shaking. The condition of two of them is extremely serious. They are almost unconscious. Actually, another jeep overtook the PPP jeep and caused the accident. Six party workers of Badin, including Aslam, Shamsuddin and Abdul Haleem, have been severely wounded. The workers are protesting that the overtaking jeep didn't belong to the procession. In fact, the jeep that caused the accident belonged to a zamindar of the area. The two persons whose condition was serious, were taken to hospital. The cars in front had been visiting a rain-ravaged area and had no knowledge of the accident. As soon as they learnt of the accident, they postponed their other engagements and reached Badin post-haste. Mr. Bhutto had to attend a meeting at Karachi after addressing people at several places on his way. Therefore, the procession was moving fast. As soon

as we marched out of Badin, we heard the good news that the victims of the accident had been saved and were now out of danger. The caravan is, therefore, heading towards Tando Bago. Oh, I have forgotten to mention that the young and the old of the area have, one and all, become enamoured of the People's Party. Whenever they saw the Party Flag, they burst into the slogan "Long live Bhutto!" At several places, crowds danced for joy to welcome Bhutto. They showered flower petals on him. They kissed his hands. Bhutto was in a bad way on account of profuse perspiration. His face and clothes were covered with dust. But he didn't halt for rest and went on addressing audiences. When we reached Tando Bago, twenty-five to thirty thousand people had collected to greet their leader. It was now 5.45 in the evening and the people had been waiting since 11 o'clock in the morninig. When Bhutto talked to them of the ravages of the flood, he said: "When there was flood in East Pakistan, President Ayub went over himself, and provided relief to the tune of lakhs of rupees. This area also, forms part of Pakistan and countless people are victims of a sudden disaster. The landlords will, of course, make good their loss. They will mortgage their gold, draw money from their banks or take loans from them. But what have the poor to mortgage? The Government should at once rise to the occasion and remove the difficulties of the people."

From Tando Bago, we went over to Matli where a solitary flag of Maudoodi's party was seen flying. Otherwise, throughout the thirty-mile journey, none of Maudoodi's followers or any other party was in evidence. After Matli, we made a halt at Tando Muhammad Khan where thousands of people had been waiting to meet Mr. Bhutto. Mr. Bhutto gave them details of the flood havoc and assured them of the PPP's full co-operation. It was now 6-30p.m. and Mr. Bhutto had to address a meeting in Karachi at 8-30 p.m. So, his car proceeded at full speed and went straight to the meeting-place. I got down and Mr. Bhutto went to change. The ground of the Liaquatabad Federal Area was packed with people. This ground had had the first chance of kissing the feet of so many persons. It was estimated that nearly three lakh people had turned up to hear Mr. Bhutto. In the absence of Mr. Bhutto, Dr. Shameem Zainuddin, former Major-General Akbar Khan, Tariq Aziz, Mir Ali Ahmad Talpur and Abdul Hafeez Pirzada are addressing the audience.

Mr. Bhutto has returned. Even his present speech bespeaks

fearlessness and a challenge to his enemies. After the people of Memon Goth and Hyderabad, three lakh people now stand up in Liaquatabad to take an oath that they would shirk no sacrifice. Mairaj Mohammad Khan who has been imprisoned by the Government has been given a ticket for a National Assembly seat by Mr. Bhutto himself and the people of the Liaquatabad constituency. Mairaj Mohammad Khan has won. Anyway, what does a ballot paper count for when the people are heart and soul with Mairaj Mohammad Khan?

Mr. Bhutto speaks out: "Mairaj Mohammad Khan is my friend, my real comrade. He has been a revolutionary worker ever since his young days. If we have such workers, Pakistan can never come to grief at the hands of any power. Dr. Rashid Hasan Khan is also a brave fellow. Who can be more anxious than we to secure the release of these two gentlemen? Our Constitution will be the people's Constitution, that of the peasants and labourers. All the three Muslim Leagues—dead things—are being brought together. If this doesn't work, then an alliance will be arranged between Bhashani and Qaiyum Khan. Bhashani has said that there has been no change in our foreign policy. If that is so, why haven't we had an Ambassador from China in Islamabad for four months now? Why isn't Chou En-lai coming to Pakistan while on his way to African countries? Why hasn't our President visited China now? Why is the "Illustrated Weekly of India" carrying articles in Pakistan's favour? If our political detenus are not released, we may not take part in the election."

Mr. Bhutto is thundering. And the audience is all ears. At one time, Maudoodi's party used to claim this area as its stronghold. But his party is nowhere in evidence now. This area now belongs to Mairaj Mohammad Khan. The hearts of the people beat in unison with his.

I am returning from the meeting in a rickshaw. The rickshaw-driver says: "I have listened to Bhutto for an hour and a half and kept away from my work. But what does that matter? I tell you, Bhutto is a wonderful speaker and a truthful man. God bless him!"

The People's Revolt

The rickshawalla has left after blessing Mr. Bhutto. The journey continues. It is not bound by time and place. The Fidaiyyin are also on the march in Jordan. They encounter rivers of blood on their way. The oppressed people of Vietnam are making a similar journey, and the Africans too. One can hear the sound of marching feet coming from Venezuela and Brazil. The people of Pakistan are also out on the march. After 23 years of this long journey, they have at least started recognising one another. Faces can be identified by layers of dust on them. The pleasant odour of the sweat of the masses has become a source of establishing the identity of fellow-travellers. One wonders how many people will keep up this march and how many faces will gradually become dim and finally pass out of sight. This always happens on long, toilsome journeys. But the march continues, and the brave marchers eventually reach their destination by dint of their hard struggle and sincerity of purpose.

The dust raised by the marching feet is now blowing in the streets of Multan. A voice is suddenly heard: "The general election in East Pakistan was not postponed on account of the floods there, but to stop the rising tide of the popular revolt. The aim was to form a united front of Muslim Leaguers, the so-called democrats and the followers of the Jama'ats. But our detractors don't realise that no front can stay against the people's resolve. A sort of 'khhichri' (a dish of rice and other ingredients) is being prepared to bring together Muslim Leaguers, 'democrats' and Jama'atwallas. And now, two potatoes have been added to the concoction, namely, Asghar Khan and Nur Khan. But the conspirators fail to see that the starving millions will gobble up the 'khhichri', potatoes and all. Some faces begin to disappear at Multan. It's a weary march and they have not been able to keep pace with the other marchers. Dust-laden faces now emerge in Mian Channu. The same voice resounds

again: "Our party will keep up its fight for the rights of labourers, peasants, students and other exploited sections of our society. Our party is not opposed to elections and the making of a constitution. However, everyone knows that the basic problems of the people: the provision of food, clothing, housing, education and eradication of starvation and disease, will not be solved by elections and constitution making alone. The country will tread the path leading to economic progress only when labour takes charge of the factories and tenants come to own agricultural land. These are high ideals; hence the long march." In the meantime, the Secretary of the Sargodha PPP, Mian Jameel Akhtar, Advocate, and the Special Correspondent of the daily "Musawat", Syed Ashiq Jafari, now in the Sargodha District Jail, are being made targets of murderous assault.

The procession now proceeds from the Multan District to the Jhang District. A glow appears in the eyes of the spectators when they see the journey's dust blowing through the Qadirpur fertiliser factory, Kabirwala, Abdul Hakeem, Talamba and other places. The same voice is heard again. The words that follow have become imprinted on the walls of Garh Maharaja, which will bear witness to what is being proclaimed today: "So long as the jagirdars and capitalists are not wiped out, the dreams of the poor people—who constitute 80 per cent of the country's population—of a prosperous life will not materialise. The People's Party is striving to establish a society in which no single person is exploited and each one of us leads his life free from fear and harassment."

The voice now resounds in Kabirwala: "The struggle for the restoration of the rights of labourers, tillers of the soil and other exploited classes will be continued and we'll shirk no sacrifice to achieve this end. Our aim is to eliminate all kinds of exploitation and establish a people's democracy in the country which will ensure real representation in the Government to peasants, labourers, students and intellectuals. I have taken the thorny path of the people's movement and this surely calls for sacrifices. The people are now up and awake and their thinking has undergone a revolution. They will no longer allow anyone to usurp their rights."

This is the Jhang District: Garh Maharaja, Shorkot Road, Nawab Shah, Jhang. But the people's faces wear one and the same kind of worries, one and the same agony. These green fields and

waving crops, be they in Sind or the Punjab, are grown and looked after by the toiling labour, but the crops, after harvest, make their way to the godowns of landlords and jagirdars. Be it the Hari of Sind or the field labourer of the Punjab, he always remains on the verge of starvation. Conditions of the poor man's living are identical in Thal and Tharparkar. But the faces of the people everywhere reflect firm determination. If slogans are raised by the procession led by Tariq Aziz, Dr. Shameem Zainuddin Khan, and Hafeez Pirzada on the streets of Karachi, against the arrest of popular leader Mairaj Mohammad Khan; if in Lyari's Singu Lane, Dr. Shameem Zainuddin, Syed Imdad Husain Shah, Murad Bakhsh Mashhadi and Rahim Bakhsh Azad demand the release of Dr. Rasheed Hasan Khan, Mairaj Mohammad Khan, Fazilani Shaad, Yunus Shad, Faiz Baloch and Parvez Rasheed; and if at Sargodha's Alipur House, while addressing a gathering of the PPP workers and chatting with members of the National Students Federation, Mr. Bhutto lays down, as his first condition, the release of all those arrested; the demonstrations everywhere are inspired by the same sentiment that also marks the voice resounding at the mammoth public meeting in Bhalwal:

"All intrigues against the people's revolution are doomed to fail. We will fight on every front, including the revolution and the election front. No power on earth can stop the establishment of a people's government in Pakistan. The people's march is proceeding apace in the plains of the Punjab and the highlands of the Frontier." A voice rises in the Company Bagh, Sargodha: "The people are now awake to their misery and their rights. A revolution has come about in the thinking of the people. Now, they cannot be prevented from carrying on their struggle for the restoration of their rights."

"What a shame that the PPP's leaders and workers have been put behind the bars at every place from Karachi to the Khyber. Here in Sargodha, some of the Party's dauntless leaders and journalists have been jailed for espousing the people's cause. While Mr. Bhutto expresses his concern over these arrests, a renowned PPP leader, Maulana Kausar Niazi, is being arrested in the wet shades of night in Chauburji Park, Lahore, under Matial Law Regulations 6-16A-17 and 60. The authorities perhaps think that they can silence the leaders by sending them to jail. But the tide of awakening that runs through the length and breadth of the country cannot be stemmed any longer. One can hear a clear voice proclaim:

"The people of Pakistan have suffered for many long years. They have been beaten up. But, now, they have risen in revolt and are prepared to make any sacrifice. I have promised the people of this fair land that I'll be the first to make sacrifices. I will even give my blood for the restoration of the people's rights. If the authorities resort to firing to suppress the people's movement, the first bullet would pierce my chest. I say the same thing to the country's youth and students who are now in jail in Sind, the Punjab and Bengal. Many students of the Sind and Punjab Universities have been imprisoned, only because they demand their rights. They are subjected to Martial Law Regulations, simply because they are the enemies of imperialism and want a people's governement.

The caravan now passes through the fields of Tandlianwala, Satiana and Jaranwala. The news of arrests has been pouring in. The same voice reaches the ear:

"The Government's machinery has gone into action against the People's Party. The Government is creating a crisis in the country. But it can no longer suppress the masses. If the Government is not willing to hold elections, we are prepared to launch a people's movement. The Government cannot any more rule the people with bullets and batons. We are determined as ever to pull down Ayub's dictatorship. The workers of the PPP are being subjected to violence, right from Karachi to the Khyber. And only yesterday, Maulana Kausar Niazi of our Party has been arrested, although the language being used against political opponents by other weeklies like the "Zindgi" and "Chattan" and for that matter throughout Pakistan, can by no means be called decent."

Several hundred miles away from Lyallpur another distinguished PPP leader, Mir Ali Ahmad Talpur, is being arrested from a quiet house in Karachi's Catholic Colony, under Martial Law Regulations 16 and 17. A series of arrests has begun. The people are waiting for Mr. Bhutto's public meeting in Rawalpindi today. Maybe he will say something about these arrests. The Liaquat Bagh, Rawalpindi, is packed with people. More than two lakh persons have turned up to hear Mr. Bhutto. His voice rings clear:

"I shall, under no circumstances, like to remain free when my comrades are in jail. If these arrests don't come to an end and the

detenus are not released, I am afraid, there will be a civil war in the country. And the entire responsibility for bloodshed will lie on the shoulders of the Government. I have made a pledge that I shall uphold the people's cause and live and die with them, and I'll honour my word until my very last breath. I am being threatened with murder by shooting. My brothers and companions like Mairaj Mohammad Khan, Maulana Kausar Niazi and Ali Ahmad Talpur, and many other PPP workers and leaders have already been arrested. Apart from Rasheed Parvez, 300 students have been jailed in Sind. I am not so ungrateful as to stay out when my dear comrades have been put into prison. If General Hamid, General Gul Hasan and General Pirzada are arrested, will Yahya continue to enjoy the comforts of his palace?"

The people of Rawalpindi are shouting the slogan "We will gladly lay down our lives, even go on the kill, to save Bhutto." Then similar slogans are raised in Peshawar. The People's Leader declares: "Guns and jails cannot solve the people's problems. If the guns of our armed forces are trained upon the civilian population, it will be difficult to safeguard the country's frontiers. The people have become class conscious and realise their position. If they are subjected to firing and violence, the People's Party is there to deal with such an eventuality. I wish to make it clear that the people will tolerate no tyranny. It is only the general masses who are the source of real power. And no one can stop the people's revolt."

There are more than one and a half lakh people at the public meeting in Peshawar. Their eyes are glowing with self-confidence, their foreheads are like so many shields. They, in fact, represent walls of steel. When we have such stuff amidst us, no power on earth can vanquish us. Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Lahore, and Karachi are all on the alert. And now Lahore awaits the Leader's call.

We'll do with 'dal roti'

"Howsoever weak our country may be its hospitality is acknowledged all over the world. But even this national tradition was cast to the winds at the Karachi airport. A grand reception had been arranged in honour of the visiting President of Poland. Some sweet little children, with bouquets in their hands, were eagerly looking forward to the President's arrival. Just then, a gruesome tragedy was enacted, the like of which has never been seen in the world. A conspiracy was hatched to kill the Polish President but he had a narrow escape. Another worthy guest, the Polish Deputy Foreign Minister, was killed in the incident. If such a thing had happened 20 years earlier ,there would have been war between Poland and Pakistan. Conditions have now changed, but the fact remains that this outrage earned an handle to our enemies against us and they let loose a vicious propaganda against Pakistan. I have kept silent over this sad happening for 18 days. I am expressing my views on this subject for the first time in Karachi. Well, if some of us had such a hatred for a Communist leader, this should have been made known beforehand. Chou En-lai and Liu Shao-chi had visited Pakistan earlier and were given a warm reception by many people. I ask you: Why was this dastardly act performed on the arrival of the Polish President? I'll tell you. A Government Minister had asserted that Islam was in danger. During an interview with a journal, he had, in fact, alleged that the countries of Eastern Europe were the enemies of Islam. This had, of course. been the plank of reactionary parties, with the Jamata't-i-Islami taking the lead, but our people didn't pay any head to this nonsense, because they knew that these political parties were resorting to such charges in order to attain power. No one had heard such a preposterous accusation coming from any representative of the Government. Neither Iskander Mirza, nor Ghulam Mohammad, nor Ayub Khan had made such a statement. It was left only to the Minister in question

who had, after quitting Ambassadorship in Indonesia, alleged that the Government believed that Islam was in danger, the ideology of Pakistan was in danger. He speechified, wrote articles in newspapers, gave interviews to several journals. Since such a statement had never been made before by any Government spokesman, the simple, gullible folk began to think that there might be some truth in it."

This voice was reaching the ears of lakhs of people who had gathered on the P.E.C.H.S. Ground to hear their beloved leader. The reactionary forces were bewildered. Dr. Shameem Zainuddin Khan was expressing the sentiments of Bhutto, the dear leader of labourers and peasants. This is the first historic meeting that is being held in Barrister Kamal Azfar's constituency which is inhabited by well-to-do people. The Ground is packed with Bhutto's admirers. The oppressed and the exploited look to him in the hope that he will bring about a revolution in the conditions of their living, and he has given them his pledge that he would eliminate all exploitation and tyranny. Mr. Bhutto has a forceful, dynamic personality and it is under his guidance that the people's march to victory is going on. He has his audiences among the peasants, labourers and students all over Pakistan. He has been meeting them again and again and assuring them that revolution knocks at the door. The people have been roused from their troubled slumbers and now no one can be allowed to gain one's personal ends at the expense of the common man.

The following day, the sound of the slogans "We'll do with 'dal roti' and "Bring about Socialism" reverberate from the main streets and lanes of Karachi. "Let's march together" is the mood of the processionists. A flood of people, including labourers, peasants, drivers of taxis, rickshaws and donkey-carts and men on bicycles and on foot, is surging. The reactionary forces have dispersed in utter confusion. The brave populace of Lyari, Malir, Liaquatabad, Azam Basti, and Mahmudabad have come together to establish Socialism and end all exploitation and capitalism. The streets look on in admiring wonder. Entire households have been set agog. The flood is rising. No one can stop it. Mr. Bhutto pledges his word to the people collected on Garden Road, Lawrence Road and in Lyari and Kharadar: "We are out to establish a people's government, a government of labourers and peasants. We are out to establish a people's government, a government of labourers and peasants.

We shall, with the help of our sword, destroy capitalism, root and branch." People are waving a greeting to their saviour and cheering him lustily for having roused them from sloth and inertia.

I am lost in reverie: "Are the people of Lyari really wide awake now? Oh, yes, they are." For want of time, Mr. Bhutto couldn't visit one of the areas in Lyari where a large number of ladies had been waiting for him, with sprinklers in their hands to shower him with rose-water. Young men had put up ceremonial arches and gates in his honour. They were extremely disappointed when Mr. Bhutto failed to put in an appearance. The women-folk smashed their bangles. The girls burst into tears. There was a sense of mourning in the entire area. The sisters and some other female relatives of Ahmad Ali Soomro arrived at Mr. Bhutto's residence in tears. When Mr. Bhutto watched their condition, he promised to go over after the public meeting at night. And when he visited Kalari, as promised, at 1-30 a.m., it seemed as if it was daytime. Kalari and Khadda were packed with people even at that late hour. Smiles returned to the faces of women. Despair changed into fervour and excitement. At the dawn of the day, the procession marched through Kharadar and terminated at Bunder Road. Flower-petals were showered on the processionists from every balcony, from every window, all along the route. At night, Mr. Bhutto addressed a large public meeting in Drigh Colony from where former Major-General Akbar Khan is contesting a seat in the National Assembly, and Rafiq Ahmad Mian is a candidate for the Provincial Assembly from constituency No. 15. At this meeting also, Mr. Bhutto undertook to institute a government of peasants and labourers.

At night, thousands of oppressed people again collected on the Kikri Ground, and were putting up with the dark of night in the hope that a glorious day was round the corner. There are two constituencies here: Lyari from where Abdus Sattar Gabole is contesting a seat in the National Assembly, and Syed Imdad Husain Shah and Ahmad Ali Soomro have stood for one in the Provincial Assembly. From the other constituency, the candidate for the National Assembly seat is Saudagar Darvesh, and the seat in the Provincial Assembly is being contested by Qasim Haji Abbas Patel and Haneef Soldier. A voice is again clearly heard:

"A political leader claims that Socialism militates against the

thinking of the masses; they don't want it. I say: Do the people of Pakistan cherish the idea of the capitalists continuing to be their masters? Do the people want their children to go without education? Do they want their households to suffer privations? Well, if they don't want all this, how can they be opposed to Socialism? An attempt was made to bring about an amalgam of the three Leagues in order to remove the PPP from the arena of politics. But our adversaries must remember that the removing of the PPP from politics is tantamount to the smothering of the soul of Pakistan, the nipping in the bud of the aspirations of the poor, the suppressing of the determination of peasants and the shattering of the blissful dreams of labourers. It was the People's Party that launched the people's movement. We gave battle to all forces. We faced India and challenged the USA. We gave an independent foreign policy to Pakistan. We turned down Johnson's offer and warned him that we would not submit to anyone's dictation, because we were the envoys of a self-respecting country. We were the first to tell Sher Ali to take warning. We had, in fact, said: 'Sheru! We are going to call you to account and no mistake.' He had ousted liberal journalists from the PPI and "The Pakistan Times" and other newspapers. The dismissed journalists brought out their own newspapers—the "Musawat", the "Azad" and "Al-Fath" and now these Papers are extremely popular, because they have acquired a reputation for speaking the truth. We shall not allow any intrigue to flourish against the poor people of Pakistan. We will wipe out the capitalists. No constitution can be framed without the co-operation of the PPP. We will make sure that the rights of the peasants and labourers are safeguarded under the new constitution. We are not concerned with the so-called rights of Valika and Adamjee. We will demand a people's constitution. We insist that justice should be done to the people of each and every region. That is why I am contesting a National Assembly seat from Lahore's Constituency No. 3. I fail to understand why Maudoodi Sahib is feeling so restless. At one time, he offers to be an arbiter, at another he volunteers to bring about a compromise between Javed Iqbal and Sarfaraz, although his Jama'at has had no truck with either. It must be borne in mind that Bhutto is nothing by himself. Our adversaries should forget that they are fighting Bhutto in Multan, Lahore, Hyderabad, Larkana, and Thatta. They shall, instead, have to

face the labourers, and peasants. Those who claim to be the guardians of Islam, have started quarrelling over just one Assembly seat. It is not Islam but capitalism that is in danger. Now, after a lapse of 24 years decisions will be made by us and not by bureaucrats, politicians and military officers. After the 7th of December, it would be you people who would make decisions. We have had nothing to do with what has gone before. We did not frame the 1962 Constitution. We are not responsible for the CEATO and CENTO Pacts. Henceforth, all decisions would rest with us. We have had to make many sacrifices, to win the right of vote. It is our popular movement that has made this possible. We have won political rights by making sacrifices. And by sacrifice alone, shall we win economic rights, and not by elections. We say again that elections alone are no solution to our problems."

Then at 1-30 a.m., slogans like "We'll lay down our lives, even go on the kill, for the sake of Socialism; we'll do with 'dal roti' and help Bhutto win" echo through the roads and lanes of Kalari and Khadda. The following morning similar slogans are heard all over Karachi, Korangi, Dhabeji, Gharo, Sondhu, Leap, Gajar Meerak and Thatta. Everywhere, one can see the oppressed Haris of Sind. They are waving red banners. The tricolour flag is held aloft. Pledges are being made to uplift the peasants and labourers. Hundreds of thousands of poor people wearing shalwars, shirts and pugrees and with deep lines of care on their faces, provide evidence of centuries of exploitation and tyranny. These people are collecting under the PPP banner in the hope of better days. They are moving forward on foot, and in trucks, buses and camel-carts. They are shouting "We'll die, even go on the kill, to bring about Socialism;" "Well do with 'dal roti' and establish Socialism," and "Long live Bhutto." The lands are eager to return to their real owners. The people's leader who has now become a movement, addresses the large gathering from the roof of a house: "Bashir Ahmad Shah is our candidate for the Provincial Assembly. Our adversaries say that he is a Punjabi. So what? He is also a Musalman and a Pakistani. I tell you that the problems of Sind, the Punjab, Baluchistan and the Frontier are identical."

The public meeting at Thatta was a historic gathering. Scores of people had been transporting drinking water on their donkey-carts for the audience. After Abdul Hafeez Pirzada and Mir Rasul

Bakhsh Talpur, Mr. Bhutto takes the floor and addresses the audience in Sindhi, meaning:

"The Pakistan People's Party is the real party of the people, labourers, Haris, and students. We shall install a government of the poor, of labourers and students."

We return from Thatta.

The Poor People's Party

We have today reached Moenjodaro by aeroplane. Mr. Rafi Muneer was also travelling by the same plane. A car had come to the airport to fetch us. Nur Muhammad has also arrived. Altaf Rana takes a group photograph at the airport. Then after covering a distance of 16 miles, we enter "Al-Murtaza." There are crowds of poor Haris and oppressed Sindhis inside and outside "Al-Murtaza". The deep wrinkles on their faces speak of centuries of oppression. The Sind PPP leaders have also gathered. Meetings are going on. We meet Abdul Waheed Katpar, Abdur Razzaq Soomro and Begum Ashraf Abbasi. Elections are drawing near and Mr. Bhutto is proceeding on a tour tomorrow. He is now free from electioneering in his own constituency. Darya Khan Khoso and Agha Ghulam Nabi Pathan are also present. A visit to their constituency has already been scheduled.

We stay for the night at the guest house of "Al-Murtaza". We get ready in the morning and join the caravan. The motor-car of Agha Ghulam Nabi Pathan's son has been placed at our disposal. The PPP flags are seen flying on all vehicles. While walking along, young men and old folk spot Mr. Bhutto's car and voluntarily burst into "Long live Bhutto!" This is small village inhabited by oppressed people. They are the poor people of Mr. Bhutto's district. They wave a greeting to him and hold up his car. Mr. Bhutto pleads with them for patience in these words: "I have been meeting you every now and again, but today, we have a long way to go to Garhi Yaseen."

We reach Garhi Yaseen at noon. The meeting-place has been gaily decorated. One sees the care-worn faces of poor Sindhis and Muhajirs. The new Sindhis and the old ones have today come together. Mr. Bhutto's voice rings clear. He addresses the audience in Sindhi. I do not know Sindhi and yet I can easily grasp Mr. Bhutto's simple Sindhi: "The People's Party is the poor man's party; it is a party of the common man; it is, in fact, your own party; you have

yourselves formed it to challenge the might of landlords and capitalists, to eliminate *waderas*. We are fighting for justice. Our cause is inspired by what is right. We are going to *restore* the denied rights of the people. We are fighting for putting an end to capitalism and feudalism. When we have a PPP Government, the *waderas* will not be allowed to suck the Haris' blood and no capitalist will dare give a raw deal to the country's labour."

The faces and foreheads of the people of Garhi Yaseen began to glow with firm determination. Mr. Bhutto's voice is everybody's voice, it is the voice of the people, it represents the heartfelt sentiments of the masses. The people, oppressed for 23 years, have come out, holding aloft the torch of hope and resolution. The caravan moves forward. Public platforms and stages have been set up even in small villages, I had never dreamed of visiting, and where no political leader had before taken the trouble of setting foot. The PPP flags and Mr. Bhutto's photographs and portraits are in evidence everywhere, and the four slogans of the PPP are inscribed on innumerable banners: "Islam is our faith. Democracy is our politics. Socialism is our economy. All power to the people."

Instead of listening to Mr. Bhutto's speech, I take a seat at the dais and try to decipher the tales writ large on the rugged faces of my countrymen—such dreadful and distressing tales. The people gathered here are my countrymen and from the country's majority. I never think of them while I spend a life of ease and luxury in town, although I owe my breakfast, lunch and dinner to these honest folk. Their coarse hands, with protruding veins, and their arms that sport no costly sleeves are responsible for the flourishing fields and wheat crops. These people vastly outnumber us townsmen, but the comforts of life fall to the lot of the latter and the former know nothing but hardship. They don't mean to snatch my comforts, they only want just compensation for their labour and a respectable status. What kind of a system is it that exacts hard work from the labourer and doles out the fruits of his labour to someone else? Neither the honour of workers nor their life is safe. They are now fed up with the prevailing dispensation. Their foreheads reflect their hatred of it. The agony in their eyes has given place to a certain glow. They are registering their hatred for *waderas*.

We are about to pass through two or three more small villages.

The going is rough. We move along canal banks or travel on unmetalled roads. It is getting dark. One of our companions, Hakim Sahib, tries to overtake the caravan but his car gets stuck in a ditch at the very first turning. Individual efforts usually run into such trouble But we haven't lost heart and have come out of the ditch. Some people have actually lifted the car out of the ditch. The caravan resumes its journey. We soon learn that we are passing through an area where a rival political party holds sway. This region is inhabited by the disciples of Pir Pagaro. There is danger of a sudden clash; so each one of us is on the alert. Anything might happen, Some flags of the Qaiyum League are flying here and there, and some people are heard shouting "Bhej Pagara, bhej Pagara, (O God! Let's have Pir Pagaro)." But these shouts are subdued by slogans of "Long Live Bhutto!" rising from our motor-cars and jeeps. A small girl suddenly appears on the scene. She is carrying the PPP flag. She climbs a small tree, pulls down the Qaiyum League flag from it and hoists the PPP flag in its place. Who is this girl? Why did she take such a great risk? She is my future, my country's future, the future of crores of oppressed Pakistanis. She represents the popular protest against a worn out system. Her brave deed heralds the elimination of the feudal and capitalist system. She is, in fact, a symbol of new hopes that people everywhere cherish.

We move forward. The sun is setting and the night falling. A dark night has held sway for God knows how long, but it is going to be over. We have entered some town, seems a big one. The following slogans fill the air:

"Mithal sain jiye sadain; Mithal sain jiye sadain. Qaim daim dastgir; qaim daim dastgir."

Mr. Bhutto is to perform the ceremony of the hoisting of the PPP flag in one of the squares, which is overcrowded. There is such a rush of people that even the journalists cannot get there. The flag has been hoisted. What should I do, standing amidst the crowd when it is not possible to recognise anyone in the dark of night. So, I go over to the house of Agha Ghulam Nabi Pathan. These are election days and houses are kept open. Election campaigners and Party workers are busy. Local journalists are also busy sending their dispatches to the Karachi newspapers. Most of Agha Ghulam Nabi Pathan's voters also belong to that town. The caravan moves

towards Shikarpur. A big stage has been set up outside a house. The place has been illuminated and there are the Party's banners all over. Arrangements have been made for serving tea inside the house. Many prominent personalities of the Sind PPP are also present. Political issues are under discussion; Which party will get how many seats? What are the prospects of the PPP winning the elections? Student leaders and Haris have also arrived. They are all marching towards one and the same goal and are enaged in a concerted struggle. The night has fallen and the stage has been decorated. Local leaders are now addressing the audience. They are all inspired by the PPP programme. Whether they visit Sind or the Punjab and whether they address the people in Sindhi or Punjabi , their speeches are marked by great fervour.

Mr. Bhutto has come on to the dais and the crowd is getting out of control. He has started addressing the audience in Sindhi. He is in an extremely relaxed mood tonight. His address proceeds slowly and steadily: "The people of Pakistan have been exploited for the last 24 years. The country's political parties had been deceiving the common man. The bureaucracy crushed the people. The peasants were denied their legitimate rights. The labourers were exploited. General elections are being held for the first time, but even now, conspiracies are being hatched against the people. The conspirators are those very persons who participated in the Round Table Conference to perpetuate Ayub Khan's rule, and tried till the last moment to protect dictatorship, and made frantic efforts to defeat the people's movement. But I kept aloof from the Round Table Conference at your bidding. And we came to terms with the people alone. We refused to strengthen the hands of a dictator. Our struggle is aimed at the prosperity of the masses. The real problem of the people is 'bread'. A constitution can fill no one's stomach. Elections are only a means to an end. They can't solve all our problems. Their solution calls for revolutionary measures. We removed Ayub Khan by revolutionary methods. We'll continue our struggle against dictatorship. The other political parties have been lending their support to every dictator."

A pledge is being made to the people. A real rapport is being established between the people and their leader. This speech is so important that it should have been delivered in Lahore or Karachi,

but it is all a matter of Mr. Bhutto's choice. He is touching on each and every subject in one go.

It is 1-00 a.m. and the audience is listening to Mr. Bhutto's address in perfect calm. Since we form the advance party, we go over from the meeting-place to Agha Ghulam Nabi Pathan's courtyard where we are supposed to dine. The diners are collecting for their meal at 2-00 a.m. When Mr. Bhutto has a short respite from work, he discusses with me the election situation in Karachi. I tell him that our workers are all on their toes, but we don't hope to win many seats in the National Assembly.

After meal, we leave Shikarpur on a tour of Jacobabad district. Since Agha Ghulam Nabi Pathan's son is not going any further, his conveyance is no longer available; Darya Khan Khoso—a candidate for the National Assembly from Jacobabad—Altaf Rana and I again occupy the back seats in Mr. Bhutto's car. Mr. Bhutto sits on the front seat next to the driver. From Shikarpur, we have to go Kashmore. It is well past midnight and there is stillness all around. Kashmore is 70 miles away. Our route runs along a canal bank and there are no lights anywhere. Actually, we are travelling on a track which intervenes two canals. There is sand on either side and ditches. The canals are very deep. One jeep precedes our car and two follow us. They carry armed village-folk. In the dead hours of the night, anything might happen.

The company breaks into conversation. Mr. Bhutto asks Mr. Khoso how many seats we are likely to win in Sind. Mr. Khoso says that there is a likelihood of 19. When Mr. Bhutto is satisfied that there is no outsider around, he says that he is not so sure of the Shikarpur seat. When Mr. Khoso asks why, Mr. Bhutto says: "Wherever I addressed audiences in the Shikarpur constituency, people listened to me with rapt attention. I noticed a twinkle in their eyes as long as I talked of other things, but when, towards the end of my speeches, I pleaded the case of Agha Sahib and asked the people to make him win, their eyes invariably lost lustre. I don't think we are going to win this seat, and this reduces the number of our seats to 18." Then we talk of other things. The route is long and there is darkness all around, except the headlights of the car, and the path is rough. The occupants of the car have now gone to sleep except the driver and I. What if the driver also dozes off!

Whenever we come across a turning on the way, our pilot jeep stops dead and a villager, with a gun in hand, comes up to us and takes instructions from Mr. Khoso in Sindhi. It is only then that the caravan resumes its journey. Mr. Khoso tells me that the area we are passing through is dangerous and there are people around who have evil designs against us; we, therefore, need to be constantly on our guard. The darkness and the journey don't seem to end. We keep travelling on a broken uneven track, and our vehicles raise a cloud of dust every now and again, but our travel is dust-free when we go over those parts of the track that have been sprinkled with water or covered with reeds.

I sit awake and begin to think to myself: "How strange that this man who owns thousands of acres of land and enjoys all wordly comforts, should take such great risks! If he so wished, he could have acquired power through the back door. If his aim is to win the election, he should hold meetings in big towns, instead of putting himself out to so much trouble, roaming the countryside. Why does he travel to such far-flung areas by extremely inconvenient routes? Surely, he is fired by some deep sentiment for the people that takes him to such difficult places.

We reach Kashmore at about 5-00. a.m. and put up at a rest house which is as good as an A Class hotel. We look forward to a comfortable sleep. Rana and I share a room. It is extremely cold. We cover ourselves with quilts and sleep like a top. Suddenly, someone starts banging at the door, and we are startled out of our sleep. We learn that Mr. Bhutto is up and has even dressed himself. We are supposed to go to a meeting. We look up the time and find that it is 7-30 a.m. only. Oh, what a nuisance; one can't even have some sleep. We have a quick wash and get ready for the meeting. The meeting-place is not very far. Mr. Bhutto's car is surrounded by a large crowd. People are showering flower-petals and coins on his car. They extend their hands to him. There are waves upon waves of people. Some young men keep dancing in front of the car. Mr. Bhutto manages somehow to get on to the dais. I don't make any attempt to wade through the crowd, because Mr. Bhutto's voice is reaching me even where I stand near the car. So, I start taking down notes of his speech, where I am. Students have turned up in great strength. Peasants and labourers are shouting

slogans, extending a warm welcome to Mr. Bhutto. It is a vast multitude spread far and near. There are people squatting in the morning sun on the roofs of mud houses also, along the meeting-place.

"O, you Haris of Kashmore, the oppressed people! Now, the days of your reign are approaching. Our party is your party. It is the party of the peasants and labourers. I know that your area is extremely backward. You have umpteen problems on your hands. Your children thirst for education. Your young men are unemployed. We are carrying on our struggle to save you and your future generations from hardship and misery. You have been subjected to endless tyranny for 24 years. O, you poor Haris! The waderas have looted you to their heart's content. They have bled you white for their own selfish ends. I shall make every sacrifice in company with you. We are no doubt contesting the elections, but elections alone can solve no problems. The solution to your problems lies in revolution only. But we are fighting on the election front, so that our rival political parties cannot hold out the charge that we ran away from the election front and took the path of violence.."

The speech continues. I stand near a green Dodge in this far off Sind desert and watch the floating faces of oppressed Haris reflected in the lake of sunshine. The eyes of the audience are fixed on Mr. Bhutto's person. Their foreheads reflect determination, their faces bear signs of serious thought. Hundreds and thousands of Haris seem full of hopes of a new era, but time passes slowly and they are impatient of delay. They have come out today in search of their destination with a new resolve. They have marched with many a guide before, part of the way, and their journey has been going on for centuries. They have set out again with new hopes and aspirations. Let's see what happens.

Slogans are being raised. The speech is over. I seat myself in Mr. Bhutto's car. Altaf Rana has also arrived. Mr. Bhutto is wadding through the jostling crowds and heading towards his car. The car moves at a snail's pace on account of the rush. The people are shaking hands with the leader and showering flower-petals on him. We come out of the meeting-place and are now bound for Dera Ghazi Khan. Ashiq Mazari who is a candidate of the National Assembly from that town, has come to fetch us. I am wondering how we shall get to Dera Ghazi Khan and also come back today,

because return we must. We are following a route to the Punjab. Our driver belongs to Karachi and doesn't know his way about in these area. He misses to take the correct turning and Ashiq Mazari tells him to stop. The driver stops the car by applying the hand brake. The speeding car that immediately follows us, cuts aside and puts on the brakes, but the driver of the third car fails to apply the brakes and bangs into our car. Under the impact, Mr. Bhutto receives a severe jolt and falls over the driver. The driver's cap is blown off his head and it lands on our knees. We bump against the front seat. All this takes place in the twinkling of an eye. If our driver had not applied the hand brake, our car would have rolled forward a great distance. We come out of the car to assess the damage. The dicky has been badly dented. The tail lights have been smashed. Mr. Bhutto and I now get seated in Ashiq Mazari's car and, turning about, get back to our original route. All's well that ends well. Otherwise, this accident, the rash driving of one of our drivers, would have changed the entire course of Pakistan's history.

We are again travelling on a canal bank. This route will take us from Sind to the Punjab. The track is blocked by the cut-down trunk of a tree. It is the doing of a rival party. We come out of the car and remove the road block. We have no idea how many more obstructions we'll have to encounter. The road is broken. The railway line is no longer there. We pass through a desert running along the old railway track, on our way to Dera Ghazi Khan. There is no human habitation or greenery as far as the eye can see. Each one of the company is wearing goggles as a protection against the hot sun and dust. But Mr. Bhutto has no sun-glasses on. After we travel about 30 miles, we see two trucks full of the lion-hearted Baluchis of Dera Ghazi Khan and flying the PPP flags, come into view. The occupants of the trucks have stern faces and are wearing big turbans and flowing shalwars. Each one of them carries a gun. We are right in their territory now. We take the lead and the two trucks follow us. After we cover about five miles more, we see some vegetation, the reward of man's labour. We have entered Dera Ghazi Khan. We have to go to Rujhan. As we are about to enter Rujhan, a few gentlemen greet us, with bouquets of marigold flowers in their hands. This area is known for its golden flowers. Our car is now laden with yellow flowers. In order to welcome us, the

self-respecting, proud Baluchis are firing off explosives in the air according to tradition. We get down at a courtyard of an old design. Mr. Bhutto comes on to the dais, after having a quick wash, and addresses the audience.

"I have come here for a short while only. I have still to go to Jacobabad today. Our party has done a great deal of work in the Punjab. There is great need for similar work in your area also. You belong to a self-respecting tribe. If we utilise our resources and realise our strength, there is no reason why we should not be able to solve our problems. We, too, can achieve prosperity. The Pakistan People's Party which is, in fact, your own party, advocates a similar policy. You are the party's strength. If you support us, we'll most surely win the elections and implement our manifesto."

Towards the end of his speech, he introduces PPP candidate Ashiq Mazari to the audience and after securing a promise from them that they would vote for him, he returns to the same courtyard. While there, he talks to PPP leaders and then signals me to go and sit in the car.

On our way back to Sind, we cross the same desert. During the journey, we start talking about the future of Pakistan. I tell Mr. Bhutto that if we win the elections, there will be a flood of expectations. It is, therefore, imperative that we adopt a policy, soon after the elections, to bring home to the people that their problems will be solved only gradually. Mr. Bhutto agrees with me and says that the PPP will set up special committees to identify the people's problems and suggest solutions. I say that the PPP will not be able to form a government at the Centre, because none of its candidates is contesting the election from East Pakistan. Of course, there is every likelihood that we shall win a majority in Sind and the Punjab. If follows therefrom that there will be a conflict of views on Central and Provincial subjects. In that case, how will the PPP be able to implement its manifesto? Mr. Bhutto replies: "We'll make Sind and the Punjab into model provinces. And I think that the PPP will be able to form a government at the Centre also by October, next year (October, 1971)." I change the topic because, in my view, this is wishful thinking.

We keep on discussing various things on our way and finally enter the Sind region.

The people of the Punjab (the Baluchis of Dera Ghazi Khan) say good-bye to us at the borders of Sind and we enter Sind with the dust of the Punjab on our faces. We are now to go to Kandhkot which is situated in the Jacobabad District. Mr. Darya Khan Khoso is the PPP candidate for the National Assembly from Kandhkot. There is a huge rush at the meeting. The people have been waiting for Mr. Bhutto since noon. Eventually, Mr. Bhutto is amidst them at about 5-30 p.m. He makes a short speech at Kandhkot and apologizes to the waiting audience for being late, but says that he couldn't help it because he had to go to Dera Ghazi Khan. It is prayer-time and the call to prayer is already in the air. Mr. Bhutto takes leave of the audience with a further apology, adding that he has to reach Jacobabad to address a big public meeting there. The meeting at Kandhkot is over, and Mr. Bhutto's admirers crowd round him in large numbers. He is finding it difficult to get out of the crowd, so a jeep comes up to fetch him. We reach Jacobabad at nightfall and attend a dinner at Mr. Khoso's residence, given in honour of Mr. Bhutto. The meeting takes place in the Committee Gardens. There is a vast multitude. Mr. Bhutto's voice rings clear:

"These waderas and landlords are all 'man-eaters'. They have been exploiting you and sucking your blood for 24 years, but their days are numbered. You gentlemen have witnessed the reign of Hindus, Sikhs, Generals and the British. Now, an Awami Raj is in sight, and no one can stop it coming. Those who assert that Socialism militates against Islam, are the very people who want to perpetuate the old system. The waderas of my party shall also have to surrender their lands. They will get no concessions but justice will be done to each and all."

The speech continues. Altaf Rana and I have boarded Mr. Khoso's car, which will take us to Larkana, We leave Kandhkot at midnight. Our present journey is over. It is dark all around. With the help of the meagre light in the motor-car, Mr. Bhutto is trying to catch the B.B.C. to hear a commentary on world news. Mr. Bhutto was, at one time, an expert in international affairs and knew what was going on everywhere, but he has been cut off from world politics for some time now. I suppose, the radio is, nowadays, the only means available to Mr. Bhutto to keep himself informed on international politics.

We reach Larkana late at night. The gate of "Al-Murtaza" opens for us and we go in to have a sound sleep. It will be Eid the day after tomorrow. We propose to go to Karachi the following day by train, lorry or plane, but we learn that none of these services is available. So we are obliged to stay on.

Mr. Bhutto refers to the daily "Musawat's" special supplement on Karachi and wants that the newspaper should also bring out a supplement on Sind, containing photographs of all the Sind candidates for the National and Provincial Assemblies, and suitable articles on the province. He wants that I should proceed to Lahore after going to Karachi and look after the preparation of the supplement.

We go to Naudero, Mr. Bhutto's ancestral village, in his company, to offer Eid prayers. Prayers over, we proceed to Garhi Bhutto, the birth-place of Mr. Bhutto. His parents sleep an eternal sleep here. Mr. Bhutto always spends his Eid at Garhi Bhutto and visits the graves of his ancestors to pray for their souls. We accompany Mr. Bhutto and his sons, Murtaza and Shahnawaz, to the graves. After offering "Fateha", Mr. Bhutto meets the people of the village and then returns to Naudero, where people from Larkana and other parts of Sind are pouring in to extend their Eid greetings to him. Tea is being served to the guests. After having our lunch, we leave for Sukkur in a jeep, accompanied by a PPP worker, so that we can catch a train there for Karachi.

The People's Victory

On reaching Larkana, we learnt that Mr. Bhutto was indisposed, and his doctor had advised him rest. Long work was bound to strain his health. On our way also, we had been talking of the hard work Mr. Bhutto had been putting in. When J.A. Rahim, Abdul Hafeez Pirzada, Saudagar Darvesh, Altaf Rana (photographer to the Leftist newspapers) and I reached Sukkur by the Khyber Mail, we met Abdul Haleem Pirzada, a candidate for the Provincial Assembly from that constituency. At night., I met Mr. Bhutto for a while. He was on a sick-bed. He expressed regret at not being able to see newsmen on account of his illness. He said he was proposing to release some important information to the Press. He went on to say: "Now, a lot of people are declaring their intention to join the PPP and have been getting news items to that effect published in the newspapers. I don't approve of this. Our party has certain principles and rules and they must be observed. The membership campaign should be carried on by the Party's relevant organisations." Mr. Bhutto said many more things which appeared in the following day's newspapers. When he felt better in the morning, he decided to visit Khairpur, and met a few newspaper correspondents before his departure.

Inquiry into PPI's doings: First of all, Mr. Bhutto stressed the need to take account of the affairs of Pakistan Press International (a news agency) In this connection, it must be particularly pointed out, he said, that PPI's Larkana reporter had been doing such baseless reporting that it had no parallel. Similarly, Bashir Quraishi of the Lahore PPI had been guilty of dishonest journalism. Mr. Bhutto repeated that an inquiry would be held into all these matters and said: "I condemn the anti-people role of PPI. It was PPI that tried to create disaffection among the people by circulating the news that I was giving up the Larkana seat, although I have made no such decision.

These reactionary forces have not changed their ways even after suffering defeat in the elections." Mr. Bhutto was about to leave for Khairpur and I suggested that he let me interview him on his way to his destination.

Exclusive interview: When we were about to leave Larkana, Amanullah had brought over Barrister Kamal Azfar's motor-car. Mr. Bhutto occupied the front seat and Kamal Azfar, Sardar Pir Bakhsh Bhutto and I sat behind him. As soon as we left Larkana, I began interviewing him. I said: "The most important question that is agitating the minds of the people is whether the PPP will form its own government or like to sit on the Opposition benches." Mr. Bhutto replied: "I realise that this question is ringing in the minds of the people and I shall shortly express my views on the subject. But this is a fundamental issue and the national interest demands that I shouldn't say anything on this question unless I have taken stock of the whole situation. Formerly, our entire attention was focussed on the National Assembly elections. At the moment, we are engaged in the Provincial Assembly elections. Then, by-elections will follow. Once the elections are over, we should be able to make the required declaration in the light of election results."

Conference of Party workers and leaders: Mr. Bhutto continued: "I am only one of the Party leaders and I cannot take any step without consulting workers and the other leaders of the Party. I have, therefore, made up my mind to call a conference of the Party's workers and leaders after all the elections are over, and consult them on each and every matter. And in the light of these consultations, I shall discuss things with the other leaders, including Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Thereby, discussion will have taken place on preliminary issues. It will be only then that I shall be in a position to express my views on this delicate question.

Slogans of "Long live Bhutto" are heard as our motor-car proceeds along the Rice Canal bank. The slogans are being raised by Haris whose faces tell tales of centuries of oppression. They wave a warm welcome to Mr. Bhutto and pray for the good of him. Mr. Bhutto waves back to them to acknowledge their greetings. Then he turns to me and says: "We are fully conscious of the people's misery and we shall honour all pledges we have given to them." The motor-car is going rather fast and I am finding it difficult to take down notes.

Then, I ask him a second question: "Will Sheikh Mujib require your co-operation in constitution-making? A lot of people think that Sh. Mujib has won such a thumping majority that he can impose a constitution of his own choice on us."

Constitution should guarantee the rights of all regions: Mr. Bhutto's answer is: "I would request the people not to feel worried on any account. They should entertain no fear about their future, because we are with them, as we have been in the past. I fully recognise the people's misgivings. Earlier, we had been carrying on our struggle for the people's welfare without any resources but now we have the people's vote of confidence. Now we should be able to carry on our struggle for the national interest with greater confidence and verve. I wish to make it clear that the PPP will not endorse any constitution that doesn't safeguard the rights of the people of every region. And we had been saying this even before the elections and now we can reiterate the same pledge with greater confidence and force, because we are the possessors of the legal certificate of the people's confidence in us."

Constitutional draft: We are now going past the Naudero turning. On one side of it is Mr. Bhutto's ancestral village where he offered his Eid prayers and cast his vote, and on the other side is his native village where his parents lie buried. The sound of "Long live Bhutto!" is coming from across the Rice Canal. I ask Mr. Bhutto whether the PPP has drawn up any constitutional draft to be presented to the National Assembly. This is what he says: "No, the PPP has prepared no such draft, but the PPP Secretary-General, Mr. J.A. Rahim, has drawn up a draft on the subject. We couldn't call it our Party's document, and yet it is important, because it embodies the views of our Secretary-General and is, therefore, an important statement. This document should provide food for thought. It is based on the ideology of our Party. In this connection, I wish to make it clear that the Party manifesto we announced three years ago forms the very basis of our policy. And we shall take every step in the light of it. The people should have no worry on this account. We shall honour all the promises that we have made to them. And we would win complete victory only when we implement our manifesto. The confidence that the people have reposed in us means that they endorse our policies whole-heartedly.

And by returning us by an overwhelming majority, they have placed a heavy responsibility on us which implies that we should give a practical shape to our commitments."

Bicameral legislature: We then talk of representation in the National Assembly. I express the fear that since Mujib commands an overwhelming majority in the National Assembly, it might affect the interests of the provinces of West Pakistan. So, I ask Mr. Bhutto whether he would advocate a bicameral legislature or a single House. To which he replies: "If we have to have a federal constitution, we can't do without a bicameral legislature. No federal constitution has been able to work without a bicameral legislature. If we don't have two Houses, it is bound to affect the rights of certain provinces. And we decided not to by-pass the people of any area. I have taken upon myself the responsibility of ensuring that there should be a bicameral legislature." Barrister Kamal Azfar intervenes, saying that a two-House legislature is a must to provide adequate representation and autonomy for all regions and Mr. Bhutto upholds this stand.

National Press Trust: We then talk of the rights of journalists and Mr. Bhutto hands me a special, written statement in this connection. He categorically says that the Press Trust would be disbanded, and that his Party would fulfil the promise it had made in this regard. He says that the Trust had been carrying on a campaign in favour of the Rightist parties against the wishes of the people who have now given a verdict against it. The matter, therefore, calls for urgent action.

Controlled newspapers: We also talk of newspapers that had terminated the services of certain journalists for speaking out the truth. These newspapers had been regularly carrying false news against the People's Party but now they had suddenly started publishing material in favour of it. During the interview, reference is also made to a newspaper with a mass circulation. Mr. Bhutto remarks: "Newspapers that keep on changing their policy under changed circumstances, cannot be trusted. We can support only those newspapers and journalists that have upheld the cause of the people's forces."

Immediate release of political detenus: Mr. Bhutto speaks in strong terms on the question of political prisoners. He

says: "The release of all political detenus is most important. Formerly, the other political parties had been clamouring for the release of political prisoners, but their sudden silence on the subject is, indeed, surprising. Now, ours is the only Party that is demanding the release of political prisoners. And I must say that I cannot wait any longer for the release of my workers, associates and friends. I may not be able to attend to the other national issues unless my companions are set free. Most of them have been put behind the bars, just because they belong to the People's Party. Their release is of paramount importance. I call upon the Government to set them free at once. The people have expressed their confidence in them during the elections, and one fails to understand why the detenus should be made to suffer the rigours of imprisonment even after they have proved themselves to be the genuine upholders of the aspirations of the masses."

Economic problems: I talk of the misery of journalists, teachers, workers and peasants and touch on the general economic situation. Mr. Bhutto replies: "Our stand remains clear as ever. We shall not budge an inch from the Party manifesto. The question whether we will join the Central Government or not, will be decided after the framing of the constitution. And before we join the Government, we shall have to find out what powers we will get and what opportunities will be given to us to serve the people's interests."

I say: "It is almost certain that the PPP would be able to form its own Governments in the Punjab and Sind." Mr. Bhutto says: "Quite right. But even then, it will have to be seen how far the Centre interferes in the working of Provincial Governments. In the past, the Centre has not allowed Provincial Administrations to use their full powers. Our aim is to solve the problems of the people of all regions gradually and uniformly. We shall do our utmost to relieve the people's privations, depending upon the powers our Party gets. We have a comprehensive programme and the people are fully familiar with it. Our programme categorically declares that we shall undertake to solve the problems of peasant, labourers, students and all other sections of the nation. We are duty-bound to honour our commitments and we can lead our Party to victory only if we fulfil our promises. I have travelled throughout West Pakistan. Poverty is our biggest problem. The feudal lords, capitalists and

waderas whom I call 'man-eaters', have reduced the poor man to a fate worse than death. We have, first of all, to eliminate poverty by stages. The greatest snag in this direction is unemployment. We shall have to make plans whereby we can provide jobs for the entire nation in the shortest possible time, and remove the economic hardships of our people, including labourers, journalists and teachers. I have already advocated the setting up of a second Wage Board for Journalists. W e shall take positive steps to ameliorate the conditions of teachers. The first measure in this regard will be a substantial rise in their salaries. What is more, university teachers and students will enjoy full freedom of thought. The restoration of the rights of labourers is our responsibility. As a first step, we shall guarantee better working conditions in the factories to all hands and a more effective representation on the managements. The workers' welfare is an integral part of our programme for economic emancipation."

In reply to a question on the organisation of the People's Party, the PPP Chairman says: "I wish to make it absolutely clear that the Party's organisational structure will be kept apart from Government posts. Persons holding Government jobs, will not be entitled to Party offices. Our Party has expanded at a tremendous speed during these three years and the many problems that confronted us in the period did not leave us much time to organise the party on a more solid foundation. But now we shall pay full attention to the Party's organisation. As soon as I have some leisure, I shall visit East Pakistan also, meet political workers, intellectuals and other people, take stock of the situation there, and then organise the PPP in that Province also. I feel that the Party's organisation in East Pakistan is essential to the country's integrity and I have, in fact, received many messages in this regard from East Pakistan. So, I suppose there should be no difficulty in the matter of organising the Party there."

Our motor-car is now about to go on to the metalled road after reaching Rohri when we hear slogans being raised. A large crowd gathered to welcome Mr. Bhutto. Mr. Bhutto is to go to Khairpur and I have to catch a train for Karachi from Rohri. So, I vacate my seat in the car for Ali Hasan Mangi, MNA-elect from Sukkur.

Each Pledge will be Redeemed

The scene is the Rohri railway station, and the time is 11-15 p.m. The Tezgam is waiting for Mr. Bhutto. A huge crowd is going over the railway bridge towards the train. Loud slogans of "Long live Bhutto" are being raised. Abdul Haleem Pirzada, Rauf Jauhar and other associates belonging to Sukkur, escort Mr. Bhutto to the train. Mir Rasul Bakhsh Talpur, Mir Ijaz Ali Talpur, Mir Mahboob Ali Magsi, Makhdum Talibul Maula and Barrister Kamal Azfar are present at the railway station to receive Mr. Bhutto. Some of the companions who boarded the train at Hyderabad have fallen asleep and cannot, therefore, come out on the platform. The "Caravan of Equality" is moving forward. The Punjab is the destination. The sons of Sind are going to the Punjab to thank the people of the Province for honouring the "Sword" (Election symbol of the Pakistan People's Party). Mir Rasul Bakhsh Talpur, Sardar Nur Muhammad Lund, Mir Mahboob Ali Magsi and Abdul Latif sit together, discussing Sind politics. The rest of the party have retired to their compartments. Badiul Hasan Zaidi always sleeps alone, so he has taken charge of a separate carriage. Mir Ijaz Ali Talpur and Mir Mumtaz Ali Talpur share a compartment, while Makhdum Sahib goes into another by himself. The night is getting wet and Sind dozes off, while talking lovingly of the Punjab. And then Sind finds itself in the Punjab. Large crowds of people, who have wrapped themselves in cotton shawls, have arrived at the Multan Cantonment Railway station in the extremely cold weather to get a glimpse of Mr. Bhutto. He has a good look at the crowds and they look at him admiringly and then burst into slogans of "Long live Bhutto! May he become the country's President!" Soon, these slogans give place to "Our Bhutto, the lion-hearted Bhutto, has arrived." The people seem to hark back to the September war, the Tashkent Declaration, Ayub Khan's dictatorship and God knows what else. The Tezgam has

started. Sind no longer slumbers, because it is no time for sleeping now. We are now in the Punjab. The train makes way through the plains and towns of the Multan region towards Khanewal. Rao Ashfaq Ahmad Khan, Mahmud Babar and Shaikh Akbar, the PPP's brave workers and leaders, can be seen standing in the corridor. The Khanewal railway station is thronged with Mr. Bhutto's admirers who have climbed the railway bridge and surrounding walls to get a glimpse of him.

Bhutto says: "This is not my victory, it is your victory, it is the people's triumph. I have come to thank you for reposing confidence in us, and to assure you that each one of the promises we made to you, will be fulfilled. We shall never betray the people."

The spectators are standing on the railway bridge and the Tezgam passes underneath. Many workers and leaders of the PPP and MNAs have boarded the train and will accompany us as far as Sahiwal which is a good distance away. The Punjab PPP workers are looking for Mir Rasul Bakhsh Talpur and Makhdum Zaman Talibul Maula who are the objects of their veneration after Mr. Bhutto. The PPP young workers inquire where Mairaj Mohammad Khan and Tariq Aziz are and call out; "Tariq Aziz, Tariq Aziz." But both these gentlemen are still in Hyderabad. We are now nearing the Sahiwal railway station. People are crowding round Mr. Bhutto, carrying his colour photographs, which had appeared in "Al-Fath", and getting them autographed by him. We have reached Sahiwal. There is a huge crowd at the railway station. The train has come to a halt at a wrong place. Mr. Bhutto is travelling in the tail-end bogie which stops right in front of the gate of the railway station. The doorway of the bogie is so narrow and the general noise outside so loud that the people can neither see nor hear Mr. Bhutto. He returns to his compartment after offering his gratitude to the citizens of Sahiwal. But since not all of them have been able to get a glimpse of him, some persons among the crowd start banging their heads against the window-panes of the bogies, and some young men have even burst into tears. Mr. Bhutto, therefore, comes to the doorway again and returns the people's greeting. The train moves forward amidst slogans and people's good wishes for Mr. Bhutto. The train doesn't stop at the Okara railway station, but comes to a halt fairly far ahead

of it near a cluster of dwellings, or maybe it has been made to stop there at the insistence of some people. All of a sudden, swarms of people collect along the railway track. The town seems to empty, with its inhabitants rushing towards the train. These people know how to stop the train on their own by removing the vacuum. And now the train is being stopped at every station, either through the good offices of the railway staff or by the people themselves by their own devices, so that Mr. Bhutto's admirers are not deprived of getting at least a glimpse of him. The crowds are much larger at Kot Radha Krishan. The train has been stopped forcibly there also. Mr. Bhutto comes to the doorway of his bogie to express his gratitude to the people. He attributes the PPP's victory to the people's struggle, because the PPP is a party of the masses. It is they that have brought it into being and are now celebrating its triumph.

We are approaching Lahore, while the train stops and moves amidst heart-warming scenes of welcome to the travellers from Sind. As soon as we enter the precincts of Lahore, people start gathering along the railway track and they are moved to enthusiasm by the occasion. At places, we see swarms of children with the PPP flags in their hands. At others, veiled women have come together to express their veneration for the Leader. Amidst these soul-stirring spectacles, we reach the Lahore railway station or rather the confluence of love flowing from Sind and the Punjab. There are greeting crowds all over. A bedecked truck is in waiting on the platform. It takes Mr. Bhutto half an hour to get to the truck and when he mounts it and waves to the crowds, we notice that the sleeves of his shirt are visible through the sleeves of his coat, but without the cuffs and cuff-links—a casualty, no doubt, caused by jostling crowds. The flood of veneration, love and good wishes, now, flows from the Lahore railway station towards Do Moriya Pul, Mochi Gate, Circular Road, Bhati Gate, Upper Mall and Shahrah-i-Quaid-i-Azam, and finally reaches the Assembly. The guests from Sind are moved by the sentiments of the Punjab and spontaneously these words come to their lips. "Long live the Punjab, long live Lahore!" There are bicycles, scooters, motor-cars, trucks and, of course, countless people, the cheering crowds. If you can see one end of the procession, the other is invisible. The people of Lahore have turned out in large numbers to give a rousing reception to their beloved leader. Good wishes are being showered on Bhutto and his companions

from balconies and house-tops all along the route. A flood of veneration is in evidence on the roads, Sind and the Punjab hold each other in a warm embrace. The programme of the PPP has united Sind and the Punjab. Anti-state elements and prejudiced minds had been, for a long time, creating hatred in Sind for the Punjab, but the people have frustrated all their designs. To-day, the Punjab extends a warm welcome to Sind. And the heart of Sind is moved beyond measure by the sentiments of the Punjab.

Mr. Bhutto addresses the crowds gathered near the Assembly Hall: "This is your victory and my defeat, because I cannot repay your kindness. I know the people who have voted for the PPP—it is those who go about in tatters, whose mothers wait for them at night in the hope that they will bring home some money to keep the kitchen going; it is those who are never sure of a second meal if they have had one. The people have supported us because we have been voicing their sentiments, talking of their privations. The people have reposed confidence in us, because we are determined to change the present economic order and give battle to the Hindu-minded Bharat until all basic disputes between the two countries are amicably solved." Mr. Bhutto is making a wonderful, important speech. He seems to be enjoying addressing the people, and says so. He says he will speak awhile yet. The speech continues and the listeners are all attention.

The procession, subsequently proceeds to Mr. Bhutto's Lahore constituency where identical scenes are enacted for a couple of hours. Some of us have not been able to go over. The following day a reception is organised in honour of Mr. Bhutto at International Hotel. The reception, in fact, takes the form of a public meeting, at which some members of the audience complain of the high-handedness of capitalists and landlords, whereupon Mr. Bhutto says: "The capitalists and landlords should take warning: if they do not mend their ways, we shall bring about nationalisation now and here, rather than tomorrow, and the land ceiling might be reduced further—from 50, 100 and 150 acres to 20 acres." Talking of the constitution, Mr. Bhutto says: "No constitution that is framed by a single Province alone, will be acceptable to us. No Central Government can run without us and no constitution can be framed without our consent."

Goal within Sight

We reached the Thatta Inspection House early in the morning where prominent members of the Sind PPP, namely, Makhdum Zaman Talibul Maula, Mir Rasul Bakhsh Talpur, Mir Ali Ahmad Talpur, Jam Sadiq Ali, Sadiq Ali Memon, Muhammad Khan Soomro, Qamaruzzaman Shah and Mir Ghulam Rasul Shah Jilani, were already present. The Karachi arrivals included Mairaj Mohammad Khan, Tariq Aziz, Abdul Hafeez Pirzada, Qasim Patel, Saudagar Darvesh, Jamot Wali Muhammad, Abdullah Baloch, Sattar Gabole and Muhammad Ali Gabole. We were bound for Karachi and Mr. Bhutto was ready to leave. When we were about to leave for Karachi, Sadiq Ali Memon remarked that the people of Sakro had also been looking forward to meeting Mr. Bhutto who was a candidate from that area. Although Mr. Bhutto was keen to get to Karachi, he left for Sakro and promised to return soon.

We decided to go to Gharo, halt there and then join the caravan. We were to travel by Barrister Kamal Azfar's car. Amanullah was at the steering-wheel. Rafiq Ahmad Mian and Hameed Bhabhay accompanied us. Many other vehicles had also reached Gharo and were waiting for Mr. Bhutto. In the meantime, a cavalcade went past us in motor-cars, raising slogans of "Long live Bhutto !" The party consisted of Begum Bhutto and other ladies, Dr. Shamim Zainuddin, Mr. Bhutto's son—Murtaza Bhutto—and Mr. Bhutto's revolutionary associates. We at once got the impression that this party would go straight to Thatta and Mr. Bhutto's caravan would go there from Sakro by another road. So, we chased Begum Bhutto's party and when we came up to them after covering six or seven miles, we told them that Mr. Bhutto was in Sakro, whereupon they made their way to Sakro and returned with Mr. Bhutto's caravan. We were supposed to reach Karachi at noon, but the caravan arrived at Gharo

at about 12-45 p.m. Since Mr. Bhutto was anxious to reach Karachi on time, he didn't make any speech at Gharo and continued his journey. Mr. Bhutto didn't make any speech at other places either on his way to Karachi. However, the caravan came to a halt, a little ahead of Landhi, because some sweet little girls were waiting to garland Mr. Bhutto. When we resumed journey and had gone only a short distance, one of the tyres of Mir Murtaza Bhutto's car punctured. Tariq Aziz and Mairaj Mohammad Khan were also travelling by his car. Murtaza Bhutto at once took off his coat and shirt and got busy changing the stepney. And we gave the two gentlemen a lift lest they should be late for the procession at Karachi. Mr. Bhutto broke his journey for a while at Malir and expressed his gratitude to the people who had gathered there to greet him. When we reached the Metropole Square in Karachi, we saw large crowds of the PPP's admirers who swarmed round our motor-car, and fixed their eyes on Mairaj and Tariq Aziz. We had to make a long detour before we got on to the main road. We found it difficult to board the ceremonial truck because Gabole's volunteers were all men of strict principles. Gabole was holding a microphone and Haneef Soldier, Raja Liaquat and Syed Imdad Husain Shah, MPA, sat beside him on the truck. When Mr. Bhutto arrived on the scene, the stationary flood of people on the Victoria Road, Bonus Road and the surrounding Squares began to surge. The truck could only move at a snail's pace. I was first sitting inside the truck from where we could have a look at the crowds but they could not see us. The atmosphere was resounding with slogans:

"Bhutto is the labourers' leader, the peasants' leader, the people's leader".

"The labourers' cry is: Pakistan is our domain. Get away you capitalists! Pakistan is our own fair land".

But the one slogan that was being raised with the greatest enthusiasm was: "The neck has been severed, the arm has been humbled. It is a thousand pities that the 'Scale' has come to grief (a jocular reference to the defeat of Jama'at-i-Islami in the elections, which had the scale for its election symbol.)"

I was so moved by the enthusiasm that I got out of the truck

and became a part of the general mass of people. Syed Saeed Hasan, Ahmad Ali Soomro, N.D. Khan, some Sind leaders and Lyari workers could be seen on top of the truck. A motor-car carrying Begum Nusrat Bhutto and some other ladies and Dr. Shamim Zainuddin followed the truck. The PPP workers were keeping guard on this car also. The roofs of the markets and the windows of banks and flats looked like so many colonies of love and veneration for Mr. Bhutto. Flower petals were showered on Mr. Bhutto and his companions. The people were shouting in admiration of their Leader: "We have never had a square meal, but we have made Bhutto win."

The procession is made up of rickshawallas, barrow-boys, labourers, students and clerks. This is the poor men's, the workers' procession. The Victoria Road, the Bunder Road and the balconies and house-tops in Kharadar are scenes of profuse devotion and dedication to the Leader, and flower-petals are being showered on him. I get on to the top of the truck to have an eyeful of the spectacle. Mr. Bhutto is constantly waving to the people in acknowledgement of their deep regard for him. He has been waving his hands to the crowds since 1-15 p.m. and his hands must have been tired by now. I should rather say that these hands are being waved ever since he relinquished Ministership. Actually, these hands are not Bhutto's hands. These are the hands that are raised against exploitation and injustice. They have been raised in revolt for centuries now, and can cause storms and bring about revolutions. Mr. Bhutto has been standing on top of the truck since 1-00 p.m. and the people have been keeping pace with the truck since that hour. It is only when the people and their leader travel together that some goal is achieved. There are thousands upon thousands of people who are travelling with their leader. Let's see how many of them continue their march until the appointed hour.

Mr. Bhutto has been addressing large audiences at the Paradise. Regal and Bunder Road Squares and expressing his gratitude to them for lending him support in his struggle against oppression. In sum, he has been saying that this victory is the people's own victory, because they have voted for the PPP manifesto which the Party holds sacred and is never going to go against it. The people feel that the PPP leaders and workers must be feeling thirsty and shower oranges and tangerines on them. Saudagar Darvesh and Jamot Wali

Muhammad seem quite good at catching oranges and tangerines. Mr. Bhutto also has a go at them but cuts a sorry figure. A poor man similarly donates many oranges at Shikarpuri Market. In the same neighbourhood, a man sits on the roof of a house, holding his monkey. When Mr. Bhutto's eye falls on him, he remarks to Hafeez Pirzada, "Look ! Soomar has arrived." Earlier, when Mr. Bhutto saw the Jamaat-i-Islami flag flying over the Bahadur Yar Market, he had remarked: "There flies the National Congress fiag." The flag was seen at half-mast. It had been probably lowered after the elections. We frequently came across overhead electric wires blocking our way. Saudagar Darvesh would always be the first to warn us: "Look out, the electric wire again!" Many a proud head would bow down to these wires which were such a menace.

The employees of the Karachi Municipal Corporation extended a warm welcome to the procession at the Corporation Headquarters and waved their greeting to those who were travelling by truck. Mr. Bhutto assured the K.M.C. employees that the Corporation would no longer be allowed to remain in the hands of capitalists and added that the first and foremost duty of the K.M.C. was to serve the citizen and that the PPP would take all measures to safeguard the employees' interests.

Young doctors had grouped themselves on the roof of the Dow Medical College. They raised slogans in honour of Mr. Bhutto and Mairaj Mohammad Khan. Mr. Bhutto waved back to them and said to Mairaj: "I first addressed my countrymen at this very place after I gave up Ministership." Talking to the audience near the Memon Mosque, he said: "On one side of me is the Memon Masjid—the House of God—and on the other is the usurper's stronghold (reference to the Habib Bank building). Even as this mosque belongs to God, this bank is the people's property. Habib Sahib is, no doubt, my friend. Actually, we were at school together. But friendship doesn't count in this matter. It is a question of principles. We are going to nationalize all banks." Mr. Bhutto gave an undertaking to the Habib Bank employees that they would be given full protection. The procession made its way to Kharadar via Bunder Road and Merewether Tower. This vicinity is inhabited by Bombayites. Men, women and children looked on in admiration and Ismaili gentlemen showered rice on the processionists. It is a tradition in their

community, a symbol of veneration and victory. Mr. Bhutto profusely thanked the Ismailis for their co-operation.

The procession finally reached the Kikri Ground, where Mr. Bhutto addressed a large gathering. So did Mir Rasul Bakhsh Talpur, Mir Ali Ahmad Talpur, J.A. Rahim, Mairaj Mohammad Khan, Tariq Aziz, Abdul Hafeez Pirzada, Akbar Khan, Sattar Gabole, Abdul Waheed Arshi, Rafiq Ahmad Mian, Kamal Azfar, Abdullah Baloch, Imdad Husain Shah, Haneef Soldier and Qasim Patel. Mr. Bhutto told the successful candidates of his party not to dream of Ministership. He said: "You might even be called upon to sweep the streets of Lyari. If you become Ministrs, you would have to be different from your predecessors who, all the time, sat in their offices and merely put their signature to the files, the Secretary placed before them. Now, you wouldn't only put your signature to the files, you would have to pay surprise visits to the police stations; you would have to go out on the streets and visit the poor people's hovels to find out what was going on; you would have to play the role of the people's servants." He told the audience that when he started the people's movement, he had only a handful of supporters—Mir Rasul Bakhsh Talpur, Dr. Mubashir, Mustafa Khar, Sherpao and Mairaj Mohammad Khan. He said: "In those days, our friends fought shy of associating with us. They wouldn't look our way. They would vacate their rooms at the hotel if we also happened to acquire accommodation there. They ridiculed the Lahore Convention." Then he turned to Mairaj Mohammad Khan and said: "Isn't it a fact that they jeered at us then, and said that we could achieve nothing."

Mr. Bhutto continued: "God above me, my friends, I am now beginning to have a sense of fulfilment. I have a feeling that I am coming out successful in my mission. I didn't have this feeling when I went to Larkana after I resigned my Ministership. Now, I can give you the glad tidings that our goal is in sight. You wouldn't have to remind me of the promises I made you. It would be I who would draw your attention to the fact that I was carrying out the promises I had made".

Talking of Socialism, Mr. Bhutto said: "Only a Socialist system can keep West and East Pakistan together. We realised the agony of East Pakistan four years ago. Ours is the only party that has

carried out a detailed survey of East Pakistan's problems. I should like our brothers in East Pakistan to go through our manifesto."

The people's demonstration of love and reverence for Mr. Bhutto lasted until 7.00 p.m. And then the processionists started dispersing. In the shades of evening, the ceremonial truck crossed the bridge near Merewether Tower and went on to Queen's Road, where Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and other leaders boarded their motor-cars and drove away. And the truck dropped the rest of the passengers at their respective places.

No. 70-Clifton

This is No. 70-Clifton. Outside the house, two copper plates bear the names of Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The gate of the residence is open. Visitors alight from motor-cars, jeeps, taxis and rickshaws. A canopy has been set up on the lawn. There are chairs for the visitors—children, women, young men, old men, the PPP workers and leaders, MPAs, MNAs. The house has a festive look now, but in the beginning and middle of 1970, only a couple of faces could be seen here. There always was, however, a posse of C.I.D. men who took position on the grassy strip of the road outside. Now, numerous people arrive with garlands in their hands. They include some of those persons who used to issue lengthy statements against the owner of this house; they also include some of the Begums also who kept pouring out venom against the PPP until one day before the elections. But this gate is open to all. It remained open in 1969, it did so in 1970. How times change. The visitors are having a look at one another at close quarters, now that processions and public meetings are over. The garlands are, no doubt, there in abundance, but there are problems, too. The excitement of the elections is over. It is time to get down to work now. The poor and the oppressed, belonging to different classes, are enumerating their difficulties. These are old matters, but now the petitioners have come to pin their faith on this house.

One sees an old man, with wrinkles all over his face that tell a tale stretching over years. This body in tatters is not just one person. It represents the flesh and soul of crores of people. The venerable old man has only one wish. He wants to perform Haj. He believes that he will get his wish if Mr. Bhutto writes a line to the Haj authorities. The good old man has lodged himself in a corner of Mr. Bhutto's house. Three or four days later, when I

meet the old man, I learn that the recommendation has worked and he will be able to go on his sacred mission.

Here is a group of ladies from Lyari. They have come to garland Mr. Bhutto. Lyari represents the agony of oppressed, helpless people, but it is also a symbol of their awakening and fearlessness. The ladies utter a loud prayer: "Long live Bhutto!" They are the brave ladies who will break the monopoly of the house of the Haroons. They are Lyari's great mothers, great sisters. Lyari is the fountainhead of the people's power.

And who are these folk? Do they hail from the countryside? Are they townsmen? Oh, they are the country's jobless young men! One wonders how they managed their education. And now they go from pillar to post, seeking employment. And these are labourers who belong to the Dawood Mills Union, the selfsame Dawood Mills whose workers have been subjected to all manner of tyranny and whose labour leaders are going through yet another phase of their struggle behind the bars. And their sole guilt is that they raised their voice against oppression, and stood for thousands of workers against a single 'seth!' When they were produced, handcuffed and fettered, before a Military Court, up went a lament from the building itself. The skies wept. The onlookers shed tears for the fact that a treatment legitimately reserved for perpetrators of such heinous crimes as murder and highway robbery was now being meted out to innocent labour leaders. And this was being done at a time when an overwhelming majority of the masses had expressed their confidence in them by returning them during the elections. These victims are the flag-bearers of workers and peasants. These men in handcuffs and fetters are Azizul Hasan's companions. Their plight indicates that the ultimate goal is not yet, and that the road to victory is beset with many a pitfall.

This is the deputation of journalists who were thrown out of the "Jung", "Mashriq" and PPI, because they had held aloft the banner of truth, asked for Interim Relief. The Secretary of the Karachi Journalists Association, Mr. Zafar Rizvi, places before Mr. Bhutto a memorandum on behalf of the thirty-one journalists who are the victims of the conspiracy hatched by monopolist-capitalist Mir Khaleelur Rahman of the "Jung", the anti-labour management

of the "Mashriq", and by Muazzam Ali of PPI who deserves a "fix-up". The memorandum contains a complete account of the injustice done to the journalists, and the resulting wrongs against thirty-one families. And what was their offence? The same that was attributed to the pro-people forces. Mr. Bhutto assures the Secretary that he agrees to each and every word of the memorandum. He says that he has all along supported the rights of journalists and that his party has been pressing for the reinstatement of the dismissed ones. Mr. Bhutto wonders why these newspaper magnates are so scared of a "fix-up" when they refuse to take back the thrown-out journalists. He promises an inquiry into the affairs of Pakistan Press International and the National Press Trust after a people's Government has been formed.

Here is a deputation of the Karachi University teachers and students. Everyone is by now familiar with the goings-on at the Karachi University. The University's Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Ishtiaq Husain Quraishi, represents the anti-people elements. He always holds a certain point of view and carries out the instructions of a particular political party in the matter of admissions to the University, student-union elections and appointment and removal of teachers. He has turned the University into a "Little Saigon". Formerly, Dr. Quraishi was Ayub Khan's henchman; now he is Maulana Maudoodi's yes-man. And he has once again started usurping the rights of teachers. Teachers who have been siding with the pro-people forces are now the victims of his wrath. He has arrayed himself with factory owners and landlords who are throwing out factory hands and field labour, because they voted for the Pakistan People's Party, for Mr. Bhutto, for the 'Sword' and for the PPP manifesto. In the eyes of Dr. Quraishi, these seventy teachers of the Karachi University are guilty of a similar offence. The University's corridors narrate the story of Dr. Ishtiaq Husain's conspiracies. Teachers who are our nation-builders are passing through very hard times. There is no knowing when the Karachi University will be delivered from 'Moshe Dayan.'

And this is a group of the PPP workers who have come from far and near. They worked for their party day and night. They are now being removed from their positions by their managements who allege that their workers have been guilty of a serious offence, namely, co-operation with the PPP. This group of workers includes peasants, clerks, labourers.

And now we have Mairaj Mohammad Khan, Tariq Aziz, Mir Rasul Bakhsh Talpur and Mir Ali Ahmad Talpur, MNAs Abdul Hafeez Pirzada, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi and Hakim Ali Zardari; and MPAs Qasim Patel, Abdullah Baloch, Syed Imdad Husain Shah, Syed Saeed Hasan, Ahmad Ali Soomro, Wali Mohammad Jamot and Haneef Soldier. They are pleading the cases of petitioners and securing for them letters of recommendation from Mr. Bhutto. Such letters are being sent by the hundred to many departments every day.

It is difficult to say whether these letters will bear fruit. Any way, Mr. Bhutto is having an opportunity of meeting thousands of people and learning of their problems at first-hand. Mr. Bhutto now meets a deputation from Khuda Dad Colony. The poor and middle-class residents of the Colony are being ejected from their houses which they have built with great difficulty. They are a hapless lot.

This is a deputation of Kashmiris, which consists of Mir Abdul Mannan, Maqbul Butt, Mir Abdul Qayyum and some other gentlemen. Mr. Bhutto has always been very firm on the Kashmir issue. The deputationists seek legal assistance for those who have been arrested in Gilgit. The are forming a Defence Committee and require the services of lawyers Khurshid Hasan Mir and Mian Mahmud Ali Qasuri. The PPP Chairman blesses the arrangement.

After knowing thousands of people, including labourers, peasants, students and teachers at close quarters, Mr. Bhutto acquires a still greater awareness of the problems confronting the country. That is why, before leaving for Larkana, he expresses his distress over the people's predicament. He deplores in strong terms the soaring prices that have broken the back of the common man, and the maltreatment of labourers and peasants at the hands of mill owners and landlords. Mr. Bhutto calls upon the Government to do its duty to the people and warns it that if it fails to relieve the people's hardships, he will unleash the people's forces which no one will be able to control.

At the People's Service

Qasim Haji Abbas Patel, Member of the Sind Provincial Assembly, throws a dinner party in honour of the PPP's Central Committee, Members of the Sind Provincial Assembly and the National Assembly belonging to the Karachi People's Party, and other PPP leaders. At the dining table, a Professor of a Canadian University talks of the PPP manifesto and asks the Party's Chairman: "Well, Mr. Bhutto, are you sure you can really put your manifesto into practice?" Mr. Bhutto replies: "Professor, the people have not only chosen me as their leader, but have also placed full confidence in me. And it is on the strength of this confidence that my party has emerged as the strongest political party in West Pakistan. I am quite confident that I will be able to deliver the goods." The Professor interrupts: "But do you have an organised body of enough workers to help you fulfil your rather difficult promises?

Mr. Bhutto says: "My party and my workers are the main source of my strength. They have had to undergo many hardships. I tell you Professor! they organised the party at a time when it wasn't customary to walk with your head high." Then, Mr. Bhutto calls out Mairaj Mohammad Khan to come over, introduces him to the Professor and tells Mairaj Mohammad to brief the worthy guest on the working of the party. Turning to the Professor, Mr. Bhutto continues: "It was worthy Professors like you who used to warn me that it was difficult to dethrone Ayub Khan, and advised me not to measure my strength with him. But the people came to my support and Almighty God blessed my endeavours, and I succeeded, in company with my workers, in overthrowing a dictator like Ayub Khan. But mind you, it was no easy task." Mr. Bhutto laments the extreme poverty in our country and remarks: "Our capitalists lead a high life just as the American capitalists do. But the poor among us? O, God! What painful scenes have I not witnessed! Dark, dirty hovels;

men, women and children in tatters; and wastelands in the people's eyes!" At this juncture, Mr. Bhutto breaks down and tears glitter in his eyes. He picks up the threads: "It's people like these who have voted for me. They have given me a mandate and I can never betray their trust. So far as I know, in very few countries has a Left-Wing political party come to power by ballot. I am determined to justify the people's confidence in me."

The Professor asks: "And what about the Bureaucracy? "Oh, the Bureaucracy!" interjects Mr. Bhutto. "Well, I am no enemy of the Bureaucracy. I am quite conscious that it forms an important part of Government machinery. But I am opposed to our Bureaucracy, because it has been playing an anti-people role. And since I have the people in the mass by my side, our Bureaucracy will not be able to obstruct my way."

Later, Mr. Bhutto points to Mir Rasul Bakhsh Talpur, Hanif Ramay, Mustafa Khar, Mairaj Mohammad Khan and the other leaders of the PPP and proclaims: "All these gentlemen are the slaves. They have to build pyramids, not for Pharaohs, but for the people. My party will form Governments in Sind and the Punjab which are the main seats of our resources and problems, too. They are the golden eggs. They are the centres of industry and the scenes of labour unrest. There are in these two Provinces big zamindars lording it over helpless tenants, I have undertaken to turn Sind and the Punjab into model Provinces and I am going to do this with the help of our Party workers and the people at large. I already see signs of success. But God forbid, if I fail in my mission, I assure you, Professor I'll retire from politics for ever. And let me add this is my first and last chance in life."

Journey for one Pakistan (Dacca parleys)

Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, by his 96-hour stay in East Pakistan, his 205-minute formal negotiations and 120-minute informal meeting with Sh. Mujibur Rahman on board a launch, further endeared himself to the people of West Pakistan and sowed the seed of love in the hearts of East Pakistanis. On the other hand, Mujib, by his stand during the parleys, earned the "goodwill" of a certain section of East Pakistan; created discontent among the people and alarm among the middle-class traders; and put an edge on the hatred of the people of West Pakistan for him. Bhutto demonstrated his large-heartedness and humility by going over to Dacca and gave further proof of these qualities during the negotiations. He repeatedly said that he would be most willing to be a party to any agreement conforming to the dictates of national integrity, and upheld the cause of one Pakistan. If the negotiations couldn't be called successful, they couldn't be termed final either. Mr. Bhutto has kept the door open for further talks which are quite likely to take place.

Before leaving, Mr. Bhutto had considered the problems confronting East Pakistan and the Six Points of the majority party in that Province, and put forward certain proposals, and agreement could have been reached on some of them quite easily. These proposals were made in the interest of national integrity, and that of the people of either Wing, and in the light of the basic principles of the Pakistan People's Party and the Awami League. The PPP's experts—J.A. Rahim, Sheikh Rashid, Haneef Ramay, Hafeez Pirzada and Rafi Raza—talked on the same basis to the Awami League experts—Syed Nazrul Islam, Khundker Mushtaq, Captain Mansur Ali, Qamaruzzaman, Tajuddin and Dr. Kamal Husain. The first day of the negotiations was devoted to a discussion of points in dispute. The following day the PPP experts suggested that the parties should first of all start with something on which both were agreed. Since the manifesto of both of them

aimed at Socialism, it would be a good idea to make it a starting point. They argued that the Socialist system should be made an integral part of the Constitution, because Federation would be indispensable under such a system, and that nationalisation should be the responsibility of the Centre. But the Awami League experts were not prepared to hand over nationalisation to the Centre. To which the PPP's reply was that if nationalisation was made a Provincial subject, there would be difficulties. For instance, if Habib Bank were nationalised in the Punjab but not in Baluchistan, the Bank would transfer all its capital to Baluchistan.

Socialism couldn't, therefore, form a starting point, although it formed part of the A.L. manifesto. Actually, the A.L. experts wanted to begin with Provincial Autonomy. A heated discussion no doubt took place on this point, but the Awami League made no attempt to arrive at an agreement. It was quite likely that Sh. Mujib was scared of the masses who, he feared, would not agree to any compromise on the Six Points, whereas the fact was that the people of East Pakistan were hoping that Mujib and Bhutto would agree to some kind of a formula, so that the poor people's Pakistan remained united. Talking to his Bengali brothers outside Hotel Intercontinental, Mr. Bhutto asked them whether they wanted one Pakistan or two Pakistans. And all of them shouted: "One Pakistan", and raised their hands in confirmation. Thousands of our Bengali brothers raised slogans of "One Pakistan" at Charfashoon—a cyclone-ravaged area—also. Their sole demand was that the poor people's problems should be solved. The following day, we could hear Mr. Bhutto's words reaching us through a chink in the door of No. 1134, Hotel Intercontinental: "Sheikh Sahib! if you continue to be obstinate, both you and I would be liquidated. We must find a way to the country's security and unity." Sh. Sahib replied: "But how can I go ahead without the consent of my party and workers?"

"And how do you think, I can?" Mr. Bhutto spoke most of the time on that occasion. Earlier, during the meeting at Dhanmandi, it was Sh. Sahib who took most of the time, explaining his point of view. After the first meeting, the light kept burning until 3-00. a.m. in Room No. 1134, Hotel Intercontinental. Certain points running into two or three foolscap pages were reduced to writing and formed the subject of the discussion at the meeting at the Intercontinental. The second meeting (or rather the third) at Dhanmandi ran into

difficulties, because, there had been a deadlock at the experts' meeting also in the morning. Mr. Bhutto later said at his Press conference that there were reasonable grounds for not accepting certain points put forward by the Awami League. He argued that the people in the mass had no interest in them. He conceded Point One: Federal Parliamentary form of Government and Point Six: Raising of the militia. The other four points were:—

Point Two: The Federal Government should be responsible for Defence and Foreign Affairs only.

Point Three: The two Provinces will have separate, easily exchangeable, currencies.

Point Four: The Fiscal Policy and Taxation will be the responsibility of the federating units. They will contribute a certain proportion of the taxes they realise to the Centre to run the Federation.

Point Five: The federating units will maintain a separate account of their foreign exchange earnings.

The people of East Pakistan had no concern with these points. Only the rising capitalists of that Province would be the beneficiaries.

Sh. Mujibur Rahman's predicament flows from the fact that the extremist group in his party, which is led by Tajuddin, wishes to have a monopoly of entire Pakistan. Sh. Sahib's hands have been tied by this group. Qamaruzzaman and his liberal associates don't have much say in the matter now. Sh. Mujibur Rahman cannot part company with the extremist group because it is directly allied to the bureaucracy. Moreover, Sheikh Sahib is mortally afraid of the underground people's forces, because his party has no roots in the community of labourers and peasants. The labour movement has no use for him. Apart from his extremist group and the bureaucracy, Sh. Mujib is pinning his hopes on the defeated political parties in West Pakistan. Soon after his meeting with Mr. Bhutto, he told Press correspondents that he would meet West Pakistan's other group leaders, too. This word "too" is significant. Sh. Sahib wants to have a closer liaison with Wali Khan.

Mr. Bhutto, of course, kept the door open for further negotiations, but only a few minutes later, Mr. Mujib declared at

Dhanmandi that his party enjoyed a majority not only in East Pakistan but in the whole of Pakistan and was, therefore, competent to frame a Constitution. Mr. Bhutto's rejoinder was that if a Constitution was framed without the PPP's consent, it would prove a futile and barren exercise.

The negotiations at 1134-Hotel Intercontinental and Dhanmandi could have proved a turning-point in the history of Pakistan, for better, for worse. But Mr. Bhutto's diplomacy has for the time being averted any possible dangers. Sh. Sahib is sticking to his guns. One cannot say whether this is due to the people's pressure or some other reason. At that time, certain industrialists and capitalists had also been shuttling between Dacca and Karachi. Most of them stayed at Hotel Intercontinental. Members of some newspaper managements like Said Haroon and Mir Khalilur Rahman had also been seen going round. Then came the news about the meeting of Sardar Shaukat Hayat with President Yahya. We also learnt that Sardar Sahib would be meeting Sheikh Mujib also, subsequently. Sheikh Mujib had already announced that he would be only too glad to welcome all those who should like to meet him. Mr. Bhutto, on the other hand, declared: "I shall meet only those members of the defeated political parties, who have been returned. But I'll not insist that they should call on me. Actually, as soon as I land at my hotel in Lahore, I shall jump into a taxi and go straight to Daultana Sahib. Similarly, I would call on Qayyum Khan in Peshawar and Wali Khan in Charsaddah."

To my mind, the most important meeting between the two leaders was the one that took place when they went for a cruise on the River Meghna after they transferred from the Nabak Launch to a smaller one. This meeting went on from 2-00 to 4-15 p.m., at the end of which they didn't have to answer newsmen's questions. During all the three formal meetings earlier, both of them were conscious of the Pressmen waiting outside. That is why they had to wear a smile when they came out on each occasion despite the hot words that might have passed between the two. But they had no Press representatives to face after they returned from the Meghna cruise. When they alighted from the bedecked launch and proceeded to their motor-cars, their faces were lit up and even later, they seemed to be in a cordial mood. And the relaxed manner of their conversation was also indicative of what had gone on during the last, informal,

meeting. A brief reference has already been made above to the meeting that took place at Room 1134, Hotel Intercontinental. When the two leaders came out, they had exchanged some sharp words and wanted to get the better of each other in front of the waiting Press correspondents.

It appears that the two leaders have reached some agreement at this last, informal, meeting. It seems almost certain now that the National Assembly session will be held in the last week of February. The Constitution will, in any case, be framed by the Awami League on the basis of the Six Points. But as a political observer put it, the Six Points would have been modified a great deal by the time the final draft of the Constitution was ready, in much the same manner as Pakistan had to do without West Bengal and East Punjab.

The PPP will enjoy a stronger position because its members, who are well versed in the intricacies of law, outnumber their counterparts in the other political parties. Besides, it is quite likely that Qayyum Khan and the Jamiat-i-Ulama-i-Islam (Hazarvi Group) will co-operate with the PPP, while Wali Khan's National Awami Party, Jamiat-i-Ulama-i-Pakistan and the Council League will support Mujib. In the present circumstances, the Awami League cannot afford to abandon the Six Points, and the PPP cannot accept them, because the people have not returned it on the basis of the Six Points. It is said that Mujib is modifying the Six Points in secrecy, because the financial condition of East Pakistan is much too poor and she cannot solve her problems by herself. The upshot of it all is that there will be an Awami League Government in the Centre and East Pakistan; the Baluchistan Government will support the Awami League; the PPP will enjoy full power in the Punjab and Sind; and the Coalition in the N.W.F.P. will throw its weight on the side of the PPP. In view of the wider scope of its programme, the PPP will get an opportunity of organising itself in East Pakistan and Baluchistan. During the National Assembly session in Dacca, the PPP's elected members and leaders are sure to get a foothold in East Pakistan. The people of East Pakistan are widely interested in the PPP programme and if the Party leaders address themselves to this factor, the Party can gain popularity in this, fifth, Province also. The people's forces in East Pakistan have come to have a common platform, and this indeed is the crown of Bhutto's visit to East Pakistan.

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These passengers are going on an important mission. It is the 27th of January, 1971. The time is 9-00 a.m. This morning the Dacca flight is an historic one. Since, early in the morning, journalists and the PPP workers and leaders have been gathering at the Karachi Airport. I, too, have had to get up early today. Altaf Rana, all equipped with his "weapons", has come to fetch me in a taxi early in the morning. I have already packed my things. The passengers are eagerly looking forward to this historic journey in the winter sun. Here is Major-General Akbar Khan (retired) and here is the PPP's Secretary-General, J.A. Rahim. There comes Mir Ijaz Ali Khan Talpur, followed by Mir Ali Ahmad Talpur and Mir Rasul Bakhsh Talpur. Qasim Patel has also arrived. He is accompanied by Abu Bhai, and the PPP workers of his constituency have come to see him off. A motor-car draws up at the Airport, carrying Mr. Bhutto, who is accompanied by Abdul Hafeez Pirzada and Maulana Kausar Niazi.

The historic journey draws nearer and nearer. On our way to the V.I.P. lounge, we also meet Mr. Ghulam Mustafa, Jatoi. He is also travelling with Mr. Bhutto's party. So are Makhdum Muhammad Zaman Talibul Maula and his son, Makhdum Muhammad Amin Fahim. And here is Anwar Ali Noon, the National Assembly Member from Sargodha. He is accompanied by Nawab Sadiq Husain Quraishi and Nasir Rizvi. Syed Saeed Hasan is accompanied by his wife. I.A. Khan and Iqbal Quraishi of the A.P.P. have already started interviewing Mr. Bhutto who reiterates his earlier statement that he is going to Dacca on a mission of mutual understanding and that he will address a Press conference in Dacca. The party is about to leave amidst the good wishes of people who have come to see it off. In fact, West Pakistan is going to have a heart-to-heart talk with East Pakistan. This is in deference to the majority. This principle has come to be accepted because of the common will of the people of both the Wings of Pakistan. This also incidentally proves the magnanimity of West Pakistan which doesn't feel small going with open arms to embrace East Pakistan.

The airliner is about to depart. One hears the announcement "All aboard !" Captain Ghani has been specially commissioned to pilot this flight on account of the importance of the mission. The passengers are now all in their seats. Mr. Bhutto gets up from his seat and goes round meeting the members of his *entourage*.

Maulana Kausar Niazi condoles with Mr. Bhutto upon the sudden death of his brother-in-law. Mr. Bhutto has not had a wink of sleep in the night on account of this shock. Mir Ali Ahmad Talpur is also travelling with us, Economy Class. So are Sheikh Rasheed, Maulana Kausar Niazi and Hayat Mohammad Sherpao.

On such a big aeroplane, it is difficult to say who is sitting where. One sees Mian Arif Iftikhar also. One of the passengers is Mr. Z.A. Suleri. He is a curious creature. All turn-coats should turn to him to seek a lesson in changing loyalties. He is Mr. Z.A. Suleri of the "Nawa-i-Waqt", of the "Imroze", of Ayub Khan, of "The Pakistan Times", of the Jama'at-i-Islami martyr, Altaf Hasan Quraishi, of the "Zindgi", and, now, Mr. Z.A. Suleri of "The Pakistan Times", again. He had been in Karachi these last seven days and making frantic efforts to meet Mr. Bhutto. And now he is trying to wangle a seat next to Mr. Bhutto's, and says: "This, of course, is a very important mission. And I have come over myself, because I was afraid lest our Dacca correspondent should "misreport" things. What sense of duty, begad! Mr. Suleri is also among those who deserve a 'fix-up'.

Even on board the aeroplane, the passengers are busy discussing the country's politics. We have left Pakistan frontiers behind and are now flying over Indian territory. I snatch an interview with Maulana Kausar Niazi. The aeroplane's announcer tells us that we are now flying over Jubbulpur. I have no idea how many miles down below this city is. The ground is hidden by the clouds. The clouds fly like flakes of cotton.

The floating clouds present a lovely spectacle and I might have composed a verse or two, but when you take to politics and journalism, the Muse dries up. We are heading towards a part of our own country which is no doubt, geographically, already far away, but some of our bureaucrats and capitalists have still more widened the distance between the two Wings of the country through exploitation and high-handedness. The people in either Wing, face the same problems, are victims of common misery, but exploitation has created a barrier between them. And the outcome of it all is that, despite identical political issues, the victorious parties of the two Wings don't see eye to eye with each other. But we haven't given up hope, because the people have common hopes and fears.

And when they sit together and thrash out things, there is no reason why they should not arrive at a mutually acceptable formula. The aeroplane carries the High Command of the Pakistan People's Party—the future of West Pakistan. We have to fly over Indian territory to meet the Awami League; who knows how long we shall have to encounter this difficulty? The plane has gone far above the clouds and is now flying over Calcutta. It is getting colder. Dacca is drawing nearer. Very few Captains dare to land in such a wet, unfavourable weather, but the Master of our aeroplane, Captain Ghani, is an expert at such feats of landing. The exterior of the airliner is soaked with rain. The clouds have risen far above the plane and East Pakistan is now in sight. We can see the cottages and bungalows of Dacca. The Buri Ganga is in spate. West Pakistan is eagerly looking forward to embracing East Pakistan. The Tejgaon Airport beckons us.

We are in East Pakistan. One can see the tricolour flag of the PPP through the window screens of the plane in the Bangladesh of the Awami League. The sky is overcast. There is moisture in the air. The PPP flags are flying over the airport. The PPP workers are wearing tricolour caps. And there are, all over the airport balconies and roofs, big tricolour banners. We had been all along under the impression that our arrival would be a quiet affair; that we would be meeting a few journalists and then off we would go to our hotel. But a huge crowd has turned up to receive us. East Pakistan is extending a hearty welcome to West Pakistan. The aeroplane has landed. Altaf Rana, carrying his camera, has already come alongside of the plane, but the gangway has not yet been attached to it. The airport is resounding with songs of welcome. Members of the band, wearing PPP's tricolour caps, are playing joyous tunes. There is an atmosphere of jubilation all around. Things seem quite hopeful. We are looking for Sheikh Mujibur Rahman but he is nowhere in evidence. The crowd is slowly moving towards the entrance of the airliner. The door of the aeroplane now opens and West Pakistan waves a greeting to East Pakistan in return for the warm reception. The crowd surrounds Mr. Bhutto and almost carries him to the V.I.P. Lounge. The Security Police can do nothing to withhold the rush of the chanting crowds. There are many more common men in the Lounge than the journalists. The atmosphere inside is so close that despite the winter, fans have had to be switched on.

Mr. Bhutto is heard announcing: "I have come to the most thickly-populated Bangladesh Province of Pakistan on a mission of conciliation." He adds: "A majority is essentiai for running a government, but a constitution can only take shape with everybody's consent. My associates and I will meet Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his colleagues and try to understand each other's problems." The rush is overwhelming and one hardly makes out what is being said by political leaders. When I step aside, I find Tariq Aziz all in jitters. Some one has picked his pocket and relieved him of Rs. 250/- Mairaj has lost his return ticket. Mr. Rahim has been deprived of Rs. 700/-. It is difficult to catch hold of the pick-pockets. There are other victims too. Arnold Zetlin of the Associated Press has lost his tape-recorder. Thank the Lord, the tape was blank, otherwise somebody would have got hold of an "Exclusive". In the meantime, I see Qamaruzzman, Tajuddin and Nazarul Islam coming over. They had, in fact, been deputed by Mujib to receive Mr. Bhutto, and mark their punctuality! The welcoming crowd has not let this "official" reception trio get on to Bhutto. The journalists have formed a ring round Mr. Bhutto. And now I behold the members of the advance party, namely, Mairaj Mohammad Khan, Mustafa Khar, Tahir Mohammad Khan, Dr. Mubashir, Haneef Ramay and Tariq Aziz.

When I came out of the V.I.P. Lounge, I noticed that there was a great demand for conveyances. Luckily, some of Qasim Patel's East Pakistani friends had arranged for a few cars to meet us at the airport. I also got hold of a blue Toyota. Meanwhile, it transpired that Qasim Patel had also been relieved of as much as Rs. 7000/- by some pick-pocket, by far the heaviest loss that West Pakistan suffered on this journey. And Altaf Rana, who had disappeared in the crowd in order to take some photographs, on his return, broke the news that he had lost his "Accredition Card" and Rs. 450/- I collected my luggage and when I witnessed the scenes at the Tejgaon Airport, I was put in mind of the Punjab. Large bands of East Pakistani brothers were dancing "Bhangra" (a Punjab folk-dance) with complete abandon in honour of Mr. Bhutto's arrival. "Bhangra" seemed to have travelled all the way from Peshawar, Lahore, Quetta and Karachi to Dacca.

My blue Toyota took me to Hotel Intercontinental. Since I couldn't get the hang of things there, I went over to the Press Club in the hope of meeting some familiar faces. While there, I ran across K.G. Bhai and heard Faiz Muhammad's voice coming from the dining

hall. I learnt that Abid Zubairi was staying at Shah Bagh Hotel. The hotel was hard up for accommodation, what with the rush of the R.C.D. representatives, the Hajis and the people who had come over in view of the historic Mujib-Bhutto meeting. I got into Mr. Faiz's old Morris and as we were about to depart, we saw Hussain Naqi who had come from Lahore. Abid Zubairi also arrived in the meantime and we went together to Shah Bagh and got hold of a room. Then, I set out for "Rochita" where Qasim Patel had taken his companions for lunch and asked me to join them. But it was rather late. So I had a quick lunch alone and then returned to Intercontinental and started eagerly waiting for 7 o'clock to strike, the deadline for Mujeeb-Bhutto meeting. It was 6-30 already and the corridors of the Intercontinental were crowded with Iranian, Turkish and Pakistani nationals. Some political figures were also moving about and one could also see some beauties and pure businessmen.

It was 6-30 and the Mujeeb-Bhutto meeting was scheduled for 7 o'clock. But before the meeting, Mr. Bhutto was to go to the Iranian Consulate to meet the Iranian Foreign Minister, Mr. Ardeshir Zahidi. Mr. Bhutto came down after about ten minutes and boarded his black Dodge, and I followed him in my blue Toyota. We reached "Gulshan" after passing through Dhanmandi and as we were about to turn towards the Iranian Consulate, the traffic constable stopped all the cars blocking our way and directed us to the Consulate. Mr. Bhutto's car suddenly came to a halt and we spotted a familiar figure in a motor-car on our right. It was Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. When he saw Mr. Bhutto approaching, he asked the driver of his car to stop. Both the leaders got down and moved forward to meet each other. Sh. Mujibur Rahman was the first to speak:

"Oh, Mr. Bhutto! How do you do ?"

"I am fine, thanks, Sheikh Sahib."

"Mr. Bhutto! I was as a matter of fact rushing home after this party to be there in time to receive you. But I wonder if you will be able to make it."

"Sheikh Sahib, you are well aware that I have never been late for meetings. I believe in punctuality and shall be joining you in no time after calling at the Consulate."

"Right ho! I shall be waiting for you."

This was the first roadside meeting between Mujib and Bhutto after February 14, 1969. Nizam Siddiqi and I were the only journalists on this occasion. But let me not forget photographer Altaf Rana. When Bhutto and Mujib embraced each other, Rana's flash gun failed. Nevertheless, he managed to take a few snaps of special interest. When we reached the Iranian Consulate, the Iranian Foreign Minister gave a warm welcome to Mr. Bhutto who introduced his companions—Maulana Kausar Niazi, Haneef Ramay, Hayat Mohammad Khan Sherpao, Hafeez Pirzada, Mustafa Khar, Mairaj Mohammad Khan and Tariq Aziz to the Minister. Mr. Bhutto had a brief conversation with Mr. Zahidi and some others. Then leaving behind his other colleagues, he proceeded to attend the historic meeting, in the company of Mustafa Khar, for which he had undertaken a journey of one thousand miles.

Dacca is a rather dark town. The street lights are dim. It is the car lights that actually light the way. After passing several turnings, we finally reached Dhanmandi where there were rows of motor-cars which had brought over politicians and journalists. When Mr. Bhutto's car entered Sh. Mujib's bangalow, he came out of his house and embraced Mr. Bhutto. This was the second embrace in one day. The meeting was supposed to be official. The camera flash guns at once went into action and it was hard to face the T.V. flood-lights. Sh. Mujib was introducing Bengali leaders and Members of the Assembly like Qamaruzzaman, Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin, Khundkar Mushtaq and some others to Mr. Bhutto. Later, West Pakistan entered the drawing-room of East Pakistan. Even there, the cameramen knew no rest. They kept at their job until Sh. Mujib announced: "That'll do, gentlemen!"

It is eight minutes past seven. The doors of the room have been closed, and now to business.

Even outside the closed doors, there is a fair sprinkling of men from East and West Pakistan. Abdullah Malik of the "Azad", Husain Naqi of the "Sun", Nizam Siddiqi of the "Morning News" and the "famous" Z.A. Suleri have specially come over from West Pakistan. Representatives of all the Dacca newspapers and news agencies are also present and waiting for developments. No sound of what is going on inside can be heard through the chink of the closed door! Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is supposed to explain today what powers

he has been given by his party and the people of East Pakistan. I am trying to find out what the East Pakistani brother journalists guess is: whether Sheikh Sahib will show any regard for the sentiments of the people of West Pakistan. These journalists seem none too optimistic. Two or three of them even surmise that no modification is possible in the Six Points. Some of them fear untoward developments.

It is about 8 o'clock. The journalists are getting closer to the door. After a couple of minutes, one can see through the glass side that Khundkar Mushtaq and Nazrul Islam are also seated on the sofa. They leave after they have had their say. The two leaders now get up and come to the door and the cameramen, T.V., people and journalists suddenly come to life. It is twenty-five munutes after 8 o'clock. Before the door opened, we could see through the pane signs of fatigue on the faces of the two leaders but as soon as the door opened, their faces wore a smile when exposed to the light of flash guns. May be this smile was meant to reassure the Pressmen or the people that they need not lose hope. In reply to the questions of newsmen, Mr. Bhutto said: "We are to continue our discussions. I am staying on and parleys will be held tomorrow also."

Sh. Mujib said: "Of course, we are going to have further negotiations. Since Mr. Bhutto is going to stay, we can have occasional talks."

Mr. Bhutto continued: "I have heard Sheikh Sahib and tried to grasp the implications of the Six Points. That's all I can say for the present."

Sh. Mujib said: "That's right. Nothing more can be said at the moment." And then he stepped forward to say good-bye to Mr. Bhutto, but Mustafa Khar said: "Our motor-car has left", whereupon Sheikh Sahib summoned his driver and told him to drive Mr. Bhutto to his hotel and asked two of his men to accompany the guest. Both the leaders looked cheerful and the Press representative were hoping that the negotiations would cover more ground. At today's meeting, Sh. Mujibur Rahman took up most of the time explaining his policy, powers and limitations.

Soon after, I made straight for the Telegraph Office to send my dispatch to the "Musawat" The newspaper's Dacca correspondent, Shehzad Manzar, accompanied me. I felt slightly relieved after

I had sent my dispatch. It is 9 o'clock. We had left Karachi only twelve hours earlier, but it seems as if centuries have gone by. So much has happened during the course of a single day our departure from Karachi, exchanges with the Press, our own consultations, the wayside meeting with Sh. Mujib, talks with the Iranian Foreign Minister and formal negotiations with Sh. Mujibur Rahman. How many important events have taken place in just one day, how many distances covered! Each minute of this day seemed interminable! These twelve hours seem to have spread themselves over the past twenty-three years! The longest day of Pakistan's history is changing into night. Dacca nights are like nights anywhere else. There is nothing remarkable about them.

We see the morning sun on January 28 after the longest day of January 27. We are about to leave Shah Bagh Hotel for the Intercontinental where the East and the West are supposed to meet. On arriving at the Intercontinental, I learn that a meeting is due between the experts of the two parties. The PPP Secretary-General J.A. Rahim; Haneef Ramay, member of the Central Committee; Sh. Rashid, President of the Punjab PPP; Abdul Hafeez Pirzada, President of the Karachi Zone; and Rafi Raza, member of the Constitution Committee represent the Pakistan People's Party. The Awami League is represented by Syed Nazrul Islam, Khundkar Mushtaq, Captain Mansur Ali, Qamaruzzaman, Tajuddin and Dr. Kamal Hosain. The experts will present their respective points of view and try to pin point matters of mutual understanding. I am heading for No. 1134, Intercontinental, which is at the far end of the uppermost storey of the Hotel. I see some Press representatives and PPP leaders seated there. The adjoining room, No. 1132 is occupied by Foreign Secretary Sultan Muhammad Khan who has come to call on Mr. Bhutto. A few days earlier, Sultan Muhammad Khan had said somewhere in Singapore: "Pakistan is not drawing towards the Left." Whereupon Mr. Bhutto had told newsmen: "The Foreign Secretary has no right to make such utterances on foreign soil, nor is it his headache to hold out reassurances of any kind to foreign countries. One shouldn't go into our country's internal affairs in foreign lands. Which way Pakistan is going is entirely the country's internal affair." The meeting between Mr. Bhutto and the Foreign Secretary went on until 11-55. Today, Mr. Bhutto also received some foreign Ambassadors, and members of the Awami League frowned on these meetings. God knows why.

Sh. Mujibur Rahman was to come to Intercontinental today. Mr. Bhutto had, in the meantime, lined up Assembly Members and other leaders who had accompanied him to East Pakistan in the corridor of Intercontinental to introduce them to Mujib Sahib. Mr. Bhutto arrived at 4-17. Perhaps, Sh. Mujib had telephoned to say that he was on his way. Mr. Bhutto looked at his watch and then had a word with each of his companions. Just then the French Ambassador, in company with his wife, arrived to meet someone at Intercontinental. He met Mr. Bhutto who jocularly said to him: "Look, my party leaders have gathered to accord you a reception." Sh. Sahib had not yet arrived, but some people had collected outside the Hotel to get a glimpse of Mr. Bhutto, who left his companions abruptly, proceeded towards the people who had come to see him and greeted them from behind the wall and inquired after their welfare. The crowd returned the greeting loudly and said: "Please help us, so that we can start our business again, so that the poor are not left in the lurch."

Mr. Bhutto replied: "I am at your service. It is only in your interest that we wish to introduce Socialism. We are trying our level best that Pakistan should remain a united whole. Do you also stand for one Pakistan?" The people shouted: "Oh, yes." Mr. Bhutto said: "Raise your hands to confirm what you have said." The entire lot raised their hands and shouted the slogan: "One Pakistan" Mr. Bhutto asked: "If I stand for the Assembly seat from Dacca will you support me?" The response was spontaneous: "Why not? You are the leader of the whole of Pakistan." After, this, Mr. Bhutto shouted the slogan of "Long live Bangla", saluted the multitude and returned to his post. Sh. Mujibur Rahman arrived at 4-34. Mr. Bhutto introduced each one of his companions to Sh. Mujib. At 4-40, Mujib and Bhutto went into 1134, Intercontinental, and the parleys began at 4-46. Nizam Siddiqi sat tight in front of the closed door. Mr. Bhutto's special man, Noor Muhammad was also present on the scene. I was looking for an opportunity to overhear the leaders through the chink of the door. But the horde of the Dacca photographers didn't approve of my strategy. So, they had a quick consultation and then roared: "The reporters would meet the leaders downstairs. Therefore, all of them are requested to go away." Soon after, a man wrapped in a sheet of cloth emerged and warned: "My leader's orders are that no reporter should carry on any conversation here. Only, the photographers and T.V. men have the permission

to stay here." I asked the man: "Which leader has issued these orders?" He reported: "There is only one leader here:" I said: "These are wrong orders. As journalists, we have a right to stay here." Nizam Siddiqi blew up: "So far, journalists have created leaders, but no leader has ever produced a journalist. Nowhere in the world can any leader impose such restrictions on journalists." Then, I said to the man who had wrapped himself in a sheet of cloth: "You needn't threaten us. Journalists are even known to have laid down their lives in the discharge of their duty." The fellow cooled down a bit and went away nonplussed. Later it transpired that this man had been going round saying that he was Private Secretary to Sh. Mujib. This argument took up a good deal of our time. Whatever I could overhear while waiting outside the closed door might sound disjointed, but here it is. And I may add that Mr. Bhutto spoke more than Sh. Mujib:

Bhutto: "Sheikh Sahib if you insist on your Six Points, it would mean the end of both of us. We shouldn't lose sight of the security and unity of our country, which I am sure are as dear to you as they are to me."

Mujib: "I am not being stubborn. This is my party's stand and I cannot modify it without its consent."

Bhutto: "And do you suppose I can make a decision any without consulting my party? Sheikh Sahib, for God's sake, think over this matter again in a cool state of mind. We both are stuck fast, as it were, in a quagmire. If we really aim at Socialism, we shall have to come to some understanding."

When the leaders came out at 5-50, their tone was no better. Their faces betrayed worry and indecision and their replies to newsmen's questions were brief and sounded rather sharp-edged:

Mujib: "Oh, yes. We are continuing our talks. We took up certain questions, but there are many more that need going into."

Bhutto: "We'll pick up the threads tomorrow at 5.00 p.m. at Dhanmandi."

Mujib: "We are doing our best to remove all obstacles in the way of constitution-making."

Bhutto: "I am going back on January 30, but if necessary, always

be prepared to come over again. Tomorrow, at 9-30 a.m. I am going to visit the flood-affected areas." Then, he turned to the newsmen and asked: "Are you satisfied?"

Journalists: "No."

Mujib: "But we are, on our part, to some extent."

Bhutto: "Sheikh Sahib looks younger than me."

Mujib Sahib: "You also look more cheerful than you did yesterday."

Bhutto: "Well, the fact is I haven't had a wink of sleep last night on account of my brother-in-law's passing away. Nevertheless, I didn't postpone this mission on account of its urgency".

When the leaders were about to part, the T.V. men said: "Would you mind posing for us awhile?" And Mr. Bhutto quipped: "I suppose that these gentlemen wish us to act'."

"Mujib: "Well, isn't this world a stage, and we all actors?"

Bhutto: "Yes. Those who acted well, won laurels, and those who put up a poor show, failed."

Mujib: "But this was no acting. It was all real stuff. The people have voted for our programmes and not for our faces."

Bhutto: "That's exactly what I mean. A heavy responsibility rests on our shoulders."

Mujib: "I dare say, Mr. Bhutto is more handsome than me."

Bhutto: "In that case, I deserve some concession."

At this, both of them had a good laugh and moved away, but before leaving, Sheikh Sahib remarked: "We should be ending our talks tomorrow after we have discussed the more important points." Mr. Bhutto agreed and went down to see off Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Intercontinental Dacca, has suddenly become the central point of activity, a hot-bed of intrigues, in fact. All the big capitalists and business magnates, such as Adamjee, Haroon, the owners of insurance companies, Bhimjee, etc., have landed on the scene. A meeting of the National Bank of Pakistan executives is also scheduled to be held

at the Intercontinental. All the Bank Directors have already arrived, and some representatives of the 'seths', including Valika's son, are also going round. They are all on the scent of the outcome of the Mujib-Bhutto talks. It is also in the air that some capitalists have extended an invitation to Sheikh Mujib to visit West Pakistan and assured him of a grand reception at the Karachi Airport, and asked him to have no worry on that account. Haroon, Valika, and Adamjee are employing all manner of tactics. Some "messengers" have been shuttling between Karachi and Dacca. Their main concern is that "Nationalisation" should not be a Central subject and that individual Provinces, should be free to carry on trade with foreign countries. Conspiracies are being hatched under the aegis of capitalists and extremists. Tomorrow, the two leaders are scheduled to have a second round of negotiations and Mr. Bhutto has also to tour the cyclone-afflicted areas.

Mr. Bhutto is due to fly over the storm-hit areas in a helicopter today. Altaf Rana and I have come out of the Shah Bagh Hotel early in the morning: It is 8.30 a.m. according to Bangladesh standard time. The door of Room No. 1134, Intercontinental, is wide open.

Z.A. Suleri is sitting very respectfully in front of Mr. Z.A. Bhutto. He had been trying to wangle a meeting with Mr. Bhutto in private. And he has finally succeeded, because Mr. Bhutto has desired that the door of the room should be kept open, so that whosoever wishes to meet him, should be able to walk right in. Many more visitors arrive whereupon Z.A. Suleri departs.

We leave Hotel Intercontinental at 9-45 a.m. An army helicopter is in readiness at the Dacca Airport. An Army officer escorts Mr. Bhutto to the helicopter in company with Mr. Mairaj Mohammad Khan, Mr. Mustafa Khar, Makhdum Zaman Talibul Maula, Major-General Akbar Khan, Dr. Mubashir Hasan, Nawab Sadiq Husain Qureshi and Hayat Mohammad Khan Sherpao.

We have tightened our safety belts. It is 9-55 now. The helicopter is flying over the lush green soil of East Pakistan. But for a few patches of dry ground, there is water everywhere, all muddy. We see a lone house here and there. Next, we see some houses that have been erected after the devastation and it is hard to bear the reflection of their tin roofs in the sun. We now see vast areas of devastation which were once peopled by happy inhabitants and covered

with crops waving in the wind. But now there is water all over, and mud, and fallen houses. Three months (November, December and January) have elapsed since the deluge, but the devastation is still visible on a large scale. What has happened to the numerous villages that once hummed with activity? Where are the smiling faces of young ones playing on the streets? The few houses that are still intact remind one of all those of our compatriots who are no more. The helicopter is now descending and onlookers rush towards it. It has touched down on a strip of ground enclosed with barbed wire. Poor peasants and labourers are heading towards the helicopter. Helicopters have now become a common spectacle for them, but this is no ordinary helicopter. It has brought over compatriots from West Pakistan.

It is 11-30 a.m., the place is Patuakhali. Mr. Bhutto walks straight into the crowd. The people complain that relief goods are not being supplied on the right lines and, if rationing is not enforced straightaway, many lives will be lost. Mr. Bhutto tries to console the crowd and says: "I have seen with my own eyes from the helicopter the enormous damage. When I go back to Dacca, I shall most certainly apprise the Governor of the dreadful situation and narrate to him all your tales of woe." We are now being escorted to the relief centre in Patuakhali by the Deputy Commissioner, the Relief Commissioner and Army officers. Some maps have been spread out in the centre, showing details of the relief measures being adopted. Some sort of arrangement has been made for serving tea to the guests. Mairaj Mohammad Khan, Altaf Rana and I come out to have a word with the people who have collected outside the relief centre. We walk over to a middle-aged compatriot whose only garment was a plain 'dhoti'. We asked him a few questions but he only cried in response. He didn't know any Urdu and our vocabulary of Bengali was soon exhausted. We also came across a student who was full of complaints against the Administration. He told us that the Chairman had been doling out most of the relief goods to his own men. Before returning to the helicopter, Mr. Bhutto again addressed the gathering:

"I have seen only some of the devastation, but I can quite well imagine what a terrible catastrophe has befallen you. I take my hat off to you for braving this calamity with such indomitable courage and determination. I shall give an account of your misery to the

Governor in Dacca. I pray for your welfare and the country's security. Our country can last and prosper only by your concerted efforts. Stray attempts in this regard will be of no avail".

At about 12 o'clock the helicopter took us to Rangahilli where we saw huge reconstruction in progress. We learnt that this area had been the worst affected and at least 50 per cent of the population had perished. The vast wreckage is a testimony of the colossal havoc. The survivors—children, the young and the old, have woeful tales to tell: how in an instant, thousands of the inhabitants were washed away. The magnitude of this catastrophe has had no parallel in this century. We walk on a narrow path all covered with slush and notice a solitary brick house which has withstood the ravage of flood. Standing on the threshold of this building, Mr. Bhutto pours out his heart to his countrymen who are present on this occasion:

"I have seen with my own eyes the great havoc that has been caused by the floods. It has no parallel in history. I actually wanted to come over in November. It is, indeed, unfortunate that we cannot be of any help to you, at the moment, without Government aid. The disaster has been so widespread that even our Government has not been able to wipe out its after-effects, let alone any political party. The assistance rendered by foreign Governments has been a real boon. I have come here to bring you a message of hope and to convey to you the deep sentiments of the people of West Pakistan. Please never think for a moment that the people of West Pakistan have been unmindful of your utter distress. Believe me, they equally felt stricken. The people of Baluchistan, Sind and the Punjab and N.W.F.P. have rendered all aid that they could muster. I know, you need clothes, a roof over your head. When I return to Dacca in the evening, I'll discuss your plight with the Governor. We undertake to render all service to you that we can. And remember, when the Government of the people come to power, things will start improving a great deal. God be with you all and grant you the fortitude to overcome this calamity."

From here, the helicopter took us to Charfashoon which looked like a very big town. The town began to empty as the inhabitants started rushing towards the descending plane. By the time the helicopter landed, thousands of people had gathered along the air strip, and were asked by some of the local leaders to take their seats

in the compound of a school building. As soon as the audience had made themselves comfortable, Mr. Bhutto started addressing them. Like his earlier speeches, this address, too, was in Urdu and the Deputy Commissioner of Patuakhali, as before went on translating the speech into Bengali, although it was quite obvious that the listeners could have done without the interpreter. Mr. Bhutto said:

"We have been carrying on negotiations for the last two days in Dacca. After our Party's victory in the elections, these talks relate to the country's future. But what is even more important is that I should be meeting you gentlemen. You have, no doubt, gone through a colossal catastrophe. My tour has been rather short, but even so I realise that your loss is unprecedented. The crops have been destroyed. Countless people have perished. This tragedy has no precedent anywhere else. I salute you on braving the calamity with such great courage which will, indeed, remain unforgettable. During the past twenty-three years, it is not only natural disasters that have befallen us; the greater pity is that the common man has been exploited over this long period. If the regime is founded on justice, all our problems can be solved in no time. My dear brothers! the poverty in Pakistan has no parallel in the world. And this despite the fact that our soil is fertile, the people are lovable brave souls, and there is no dearth of resources. Then why all this poverty, I ask you? If the demands of the poor labourers and peasants are met, if good seed is made available, if the toiling tillers acquire ownership of the lands they cultivate, prosperity will be round the corner and their children will lead a life free of all care. The Pakistan People's Party has taken stock of what has been happening over the past twenty-three years and set out to put an end to all manner of exploitation, and replace the prevailing system of government by Socialism rooted in justice. Our manifesto aims at providing food, clothing, education, medical relief and shelter for the poor whether they live in West or East Pakistan. That's why our brothers in West Pakistan have returned the Pakistan People's Party. These were the first-ever general elections in the country. There was ignorance of things all round, but it could not be blamed on the common man. It was the prevailing regime that was at fault. A great deal of propaganda was launched against our Party. The entire press was opposed to us. All the big shots were our sworn enemies. The anti-people elements had set out to dub us, true Muslims, "Kafir" But all we said was that this

is not a fight between Muslims and heretics, but a battle between the oppressed and the oppressor. The people who have voted the Pakistan People's Party to power are in complete agreement with the Party which is out to eliminate poverty, and oppression and establish the rule of law. Granted that we have scored victory in West Pakistan alone, but Pakistan is indivisible. We'll always be at your service with all our heart. We are prepared to lay down our lives for the people of both Wings. The Capitalists are exploiting the common people of West Pakistan in the same manner as they have exploited you. And it is they who are the targets of our attack. Both you and we have a common cause. If we stand united, we are bound to win. The anti-Pakistan elements want us removed from the political scene. Their main object is that the Awami League and the People's Party should not come to terms. They are mortally afraid that if a people's government comes to power, their monopolies will no longer be secure. They are shuttling between Dacca and Karachi. We are determined to defeat their designs. And we can readily do this with the people's support. The country's solidarity doesn't rest with me or any other individual. It is in your hands, in the hands of the thirteen crore people. God has given you the intelligence to understand things as they are. You have the eyes and ears that have been denied to the capitalists by Almighty God. We have the fullest faith in the people and we'll accept your verdict without hesitation. We have the greatest regard for your sentiments and aspirations. Ayub Khan was extremely cruel to the people. Tell me, who launched a campaign against his high-handedness and when? You know very well that we regard the people's enemy as our enemy number one. We want that Pakistan should stay united. Please raise your hands if you stand for one Pakistan. (Everyone among the audience raises his hands and there is a loud and spontaneous chorus: "Ekta Pakistan"). Of course, the poor have always stood for one Pakistan and will continue to do so." Mr. Bhutto finished his speech amidst loud applause and then he took leave of the audience.

Later, we went to a school building near by and met the people at large and heard their grievances. They were, in fact full of complaints. They wanted bread, clothes, houses. No one seemed to bother about the Constitution or the Six Points. As we were about to climb the helicopter, the Pilot requested the police to ask the crowd

to keep away from the plane, so that they could keep clear of its wing. And a policeman, true to tradition, hit a man with a club. This outraged the mob and the offender would surely have come to grief, had not Mairaj Mohammad Khan jumped forward to intervene. He pushed back the police posse and embraced the man who had been hit. Mr. Bhutto called aloud from the helicopter: "Mairaj, bring over the chap". He embraced the man who had been hurt by the police and tried to pacify him: "I must apologize to you for what has happened. I call this incident grave injustice. But rest assured, no 'lathis' will be used and no bullets will fly under a people's regime. I belong to the common people and can never put up with such high-handedness. We have also faced bullets and been charged with 'Lathis.' We still remember 'the Dera Ismail Khan wound'. But all such violence will come to an end under a people's government. I again apologize to you for this sorry incident. And now let me say good-bye to you."

Mr. Bhutto's words pacify the people a great deal and they begin raising slogans of "Long live Bhutto!" The helicopter is going up. We are going back to Dacca. I think to myself: "The poor workers and peasants think alike everywhere in Pakistan. If Mr. Bhutto had carried on his political campaign in East Pakistan also, how different things would have been!"

Our helicopter is about to land in Dacca. Ibrahim has brought the blue Toyota to fetch us, which has made us quite mobile. It is 2-00 p.m. The leaders are going to meet in Dhanmandi at 5-00 p.m. The experts of both the political parties had been having talks in our absence. The Dhanmandi parleys are a very important affair.

Dhanmandi was again crowded. Bhutto and Mujib were busy inside talking. Outside, Dr. Mubashir Hasan was talking to Dacca journalists about our visit to the flood-affected areas by the helicopter, but they seemed to be taking no particular interest in what he was saying. They considered our tour of the afflicted areas to be of not much consequence, and attached no importance to Mr. Bhutto meeting the grief-stricken people of East Pakistan. There were also conjectures about the experts' talk in the morning and it was given out that the talks had ended in a deadlock, and it was feared that this might have repercussions on the negotiations between the two leaders.

Today's talks come to an end sooner than expected. Both the leaders have come out at 6-07 p.m., either of them has put on a long face. It is Mr. Bhutto who talks to the newsmen most of the time. He asks them not to draw any wrong conclusions, adding:

"We should remain hopeful of the country's solidarity remaining intact. When I go back now, I shall discuss things with my Partymen. It's only then that we will reach some conclusion. Our task is, indeed, difficult, but we hope to find a solution".

Mr. Mujib briefly tells the Pressmen: "We are not meeting tomorrow." There is such a great rush of people that Mr. Bhutto is finding it hard to take his way to his motor-car: Mr. Mujib looks very angry. One can hear his roaring voice. He snubs his workers and tells them to make way for Bhutto. After Mr. Bhutto's departure, Sh. Mujib gets the newsmen together and leads them to his drawing-room and briefs them in these words: ' Let me make it clear that our Party is committed to the Six Points. We want that the National Assembly should be convened on February 15. It is the duty of the elected members to frame a constitution as soon as possible.

The Awami League enjoys a majority not only in East Pakistan but in the whole of the country. The Awami League is not only keen on coming to an understanding with Bhutto, but is also eager to meet the representatives of the Frontier and Baluchistan. I shall meet the other group leaders also, who need my cooperation as soon as possible. Anyway we can frame a constitution on our own."

Sheikh Mujib is surrounded by journalists. I am looking at the pictures on the walls of his drawing-room. In one photograph, he is seen shaking hands with Mao Tse-tung. Alongside, I see a picture of the Ka'aba. One also notices photographs of Tagore, Nazrul Islam and Fazlul Haq. In one photograph, Sh. Mujib is seen addressing a large public meeting in Paltan Maidan. We come out of the drawing-room. The journalists leave for Intercontinental to meet Mr. Bhutto. They want to know his reaction to Sh. Mujib's Press conference. But Mr. Bhutto is not in his room. He has probably gone to see Governor Ahsan, because he had promised the flood victims that he would convey their grievances to the Governor.

Tomorrow, we are to go out on a pleasure trip by a launch. This outing has been organised in honour of the People's Party

delegation. Sh. Mujib is due to arrive any moment. It is 10-00 a.m. The blue Toyota is not available today; so I have to depend upon somebody's generosity. The Pressmen have not been invited to this cruise. Our hosts, the Awami League men, are, therefore, not willing to take me along. An East Pakistani friend of Qasim Patel gives me a lift in his car. The invitees have left. When I reach Sadarghat, I learn that the launch has gone but that the invitees have to board the launch at Narayanganj Ghat. There is a great rush of traffic on the Nawabpur Road. The car can, therefore, move only at a snail's pace. I am sure that the launch would have left by the time I arrive. But I reach the Ghat just two minutes before the departure of the launch. As soon as Sh. Mujib's Press Secretary, Badshah Hussain, sees me, he announces: "The Pressmen are not going with us." But Mr. Bhutto, who stands by the side of Sh. Mujib catches sight of me and says: "He is going with me." Hence I get the passport to travel with the invited party. The passengers include prominent leaders, members of the Parliamentary Committee and Assembly Members of the West Pakistan majority party. The launch moves forward on the waves of the Meghna and carries, as it were, the future of Pakistan on its shoulders. All the important leaders of the country's two Wings have got an opportunity of getting together and are discussing constitutional matters. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is surrounded by the People's Party leaders; the Awami League leaders have gathered round Mr. Bhutto. We notice members of all the three groups of the Awami League, who meet people of their individual thinking. Suddenly, an Awami League intellectual asks a People's Party leader: "What do you think of Sheikh Mujib?" Pat comes the answer: "Oh, he's an American Agent." This unexpected reply silences the intellectual. As I heard the conversation that was going on, I got the impression that the People's Party parliamentarians were much better speakers on procedures relating to the National Assembly than their Awami League counterparts. The A. L. Assembly Members seem very sentimental over the Six Points but cannot, in much detail, explain the implications of their manifesto. The launch appears to be a symbol of "One Pakistan", and slowly moves forward on the waves of the Meghna. As we near Munshiganj, several beats come up to our launch and their crew raise slogans of "Long live Mujib and Bhutto!" These oppressed boatmen eagerly wish that the two leaders would come to some understanding and that power would be transferred to the common people,

and the deteriorating economic situation set right. Mir Ali Ahmed Talpur stands on the roof of the launch and is visibly moved by the natural beauty of East Pakistan. Tariq Aziz looks rather pensive. Mairaj Mohammad Khan is going round, meeting all the people on the launch. Abdul Hafeez Pirzada is engaged in conversation with Dr. Kamal Hossain. Some men are posing for photographer Altaf Rana. Qasim Patel and Mr. Hashmi of Orient Advertisers are carrying on a discussion with the Awami League Secretary-General, Qamaruzzman. The A. L. student leader, Tufail Ahmed, is looking forward to meeting Mairaj Mohammad Khan. The launch has three storeys and everywhere, one feels that East and West Pakistan are making an earnest endeavour to understand each other. This "Journey of understanding" is a delicate affair. Much depends on the waves of the river. If the waves behave, the journey can come to a fruitful end. Otherwise, the river is deep. And there are conspiracies afloat.

It is time for lunch. The lunch items ('biryani', chicken and lamb) are getting cold on account of the wet of the river. The guests from West Pakistan have eaten sparely. In the meantime, a boat, adorned like a bride, comes alongside of our launch. I hear that this is the official launch. Sh. Mujib and Mr. Bhutto transfer to this launch. It is 2-00 p.m. The launch now leaves, carrying the two leaders. Sh. Sahib is accompanied by two of this bodyguard. Mr. Bhutto goes alone. The official launch sometimes approaches our boat, sometimes moves away. All eyes are fixed on the official launch. In fact, the eyes of the entire world are fixed on it. The passengers are now travelling, not in one, but two launches. Both the launches are being tossed about on the river and everyone's heart is throbbing fast.

The official launch sails ahead of our launch. We are now going back to Dacca after a journey of seventy miles. Someone tells us that we have reached Rangpur. A small launch carries Barkat Saleemi of the Punjab Awami League and Hamid Sarfaraz. They follow our launch. The Meghna flows peacefully. Some fishermen are seen in small boats. They have cast their nets into the water in the hope of a sufficient catch of fish, so that they can have their evening meal. No one can tell how close together the People's Party and Awami League leaders and Members of the Assembly have come after this 70-mile journey. It appears that the "match" will end in a draw. People are tired of talking about currency, taxation,

foreign aid and foreign trade. It seems that these East Pakistani leaders consider West Pakistan to be a single unit like East Pakistan. They think that there will be only two groups to carry on foreign trade. They have been offered sufficient relaxation in the matter of foreign policy. It has also been put to them that they can form a Government in the Centre and that they should join the Central Government and do whatever they like for East Pakistan. Otherwise, there would be five foreign policies. But they say: "Why should it be assumed that only West Pakistan has the virtue of patriotism and that West Pakistan alone can safeguard the country's security? Why is it being assumed that now that we have got an opportunity of doing something for our Province, the country's integrity stands in danger? The provinces will have to confine themselves to the framework of the foreign policy to be laid down by us, while negotiating foreign aid and trade."

Mr. Bhutto and Sheikh Mujib leave the deck and go into the cabin because it is getting cold. It is apparent that the Awami League representatives are out to give the impression that they would not budge an inch from their position, because it is only after 23 years of oppression, they say, that they have got an opportunity of improving their lot. They seem to be quite unaware of the sentiments of West Pakistan. Among the East Pakistan leaders present here, it is only the Secretary-General of the Awami League, Mr. Qamaruzzaman, who has made extensive tours of West Pakistan. That's why he is taking a lenient view of things. As regards, Sheikh Mujib, he passed through Lahore in 1969 after his release on his way to Islamabad to attend the Round Table Conference. Thereafter, he went to Karachi and entered into an agreement with G.M. Syed. He visited Lahore again in 1970, addressed a public meeting and came away. Obviously, the West Pakistan leaders of his Party didn't let him grasp the exact situation in West Pakistan.

One of the Awami League groups is called the "Progressive Group". The members of this group were in search of the more progressive group of the People's Party. Members of either group finally got together. At this meeting, reference was made to the struggle of workers and peasants of East and West Pakistan, and to those who were working to bring about a people's revolution. The leaders of the People's Party asked members of the Awami League Progressive Group why Sheikh Mujib was after their blood and

whether they were regarded as the country's enemies. To wish the latter couldn't make their position very clear; they wouldn't talk too openly on the subject.

I talked to student leader Tufail Ahmad, who was now an M.N.A. I asked him: "Who constitute the leadership of the student movement now?" He said: "Where's the need for it?" By which he meant that the Awami League had come to power; so the students need no longer continue their movement to safeguard their rights. How far he was right, he must have himself realised, because in the recent people's movement, the Awami League had stood in need of student support.

Many passengers went to the top of the launch, "Nayak", and were enjoying Nature's vast spectacle spread out in front of them. The air was bracing. There were trees and green fields on either side of the muddy Meghna, and the great sailors of East Pakistan rowing their boats, were in view. I also met Mr. Zaheeruddin who had defeated the Amir-i-Jama'at Islami, Prof. Ghulam Azam. When I was introduced to him, he at once said: "Since we were pitched against the Jamaat-i-Islami, your "Al-Fath" proved of great value to us. I took great advantage of the documents, relating to Maulana Abul Ala Maudoodi's name, that had appeared on the front page of the journal. It provided me with a good handle for propaganda." And then he narrated an anecdote: "Once, when Prof. Ghulam Azam got into a boat to cross the river in connection with his electioneering campaign, the boatmen cried out: "Why are you travelling in our election symbol; you should have got on to your own election symbol: the "scale".

Now, tea and sweets were being served to the party. We were nearing Dacca. It was almost 3.45 p.m. The Narayanganj Ghat was coming into view. The launch carrying Mr. Bhutto and Sh. Mujib reached the bank first. Our launch stopped a little ahead of it. Mr. Bhutto was the first to get out of the launch. He looked relieved. We then saw Sh. Mujib going towards the staircase of the launch. He loudly said something in Bengali, which we failed to understand. Soon after, the rest of the passengers started disembarking. The two leaders didn't have to face any Pressmen. They got into a car and drove away. Their faces showed signs of relief.

Mr. Hashmi's red car took me to Hotel Intercontinental. Altaf Rana was already there. He told me that the two leaders had been in a jolly mood. When Sh. Mujib dropped Mr. Bhutto at the Hotel and wanted to take leave of him, Mr. Bhutto dragged him upstairs: "Oh, you can't leave without having a cup of tea." So, they had tea in Room No. 1134 most cordially. And when Sheikh Sahib finally got up to leave, Mr. Bhutto insisted that he would go downstairs to see him off. At this. Sheikh Mujib said: "This thing will never end. You will keep coming down to see me off and I'll keep coming up to say good-bye to you. Please sit down and let me go."

Later, it transpired that no significant development had taken place during the talks between the two leaders; however, it was agreed that they would not close the door to future negotiations. It was said that Sheikh Sahib would try to come over to West Pakistan, and Mr. Bhutto would visit East Pakistan again, if possible. As regards the date of the National Assembly session, Mr. Bhutto seemed to be in no hurry, because he had not yet made adequate preparations to go to the Assembly. The people had been pinning great hopes on the negotiations on board the launch, because the prospects looked quite favourable after the cruise on the Meghna.

Mr. Bhutto was to address a Press conference shortly. There was a great rush for the conference in a corner of the Hotel already. All East Pakistan and foreign journalists and Pressmen from West Pakistan had come armed with questions. Before the conference, they had all come to an understanding as to who will ask what question and how they were going to corner Mr. Bhutto. The "Musawaat" Special Correspondent in Dacca was telling us that there had always been a similar rush at each one of Mr. Bhutto's Press Conferences. We also learnt that one of Sh. Mujib's men attended Press conferences, equipped with a tape-recorder, so that Sheikh Sahib should know the proceedings even before they reached the desks.

After the Press conference, Mr. Bhutto left Dacca for Lahore, and I stayed on to fly to Karachi the following day.

Neglected Baluchistan

I kept on waiting for Mr. Farooq Mueen from 5-00 to 5-30 a.m. but he didn't turn up. So, I hopped into a taxi and left for the Karachi Airport. In a few moments, Dr. Mubashir Hasan was seen getting off a motorcar. In the meantime, Mr. Fasih Iqbal of the "Zamana" also arrived, wearing his usual smile. Soon after, Mr. Bhutto came along, accompanied by Mr. Mustafa Khar. As we moved towards the counter Karamatullah of the "Jung" and Iqbal Quraishi of the A.P.P. joined us. They had stayed overnight at the Press Club and reached the Airport at 3-00 a.m. While moving from the counter, they were in conversation with Mr. Bhutto immediately; a voice was heard coming from behind: "Sir I am also coming with you." This was Ali Akhtar Rizvi of the "Mashriq". He wanted to suggest that he was going with Mr. Bhutto to cover the Quetta meeting. Heavy-weight Karamatullah asked in a low tone: "Sir are you taking along any reporters?" Mr. Bhutto said: "No; some of them might be going on their own. I am only taking Mahmud Sham with me, because he is associated with our newspaper." Whereupon Karamatullah only smiled in instalments. Fasih Iqbal, Ali Akhtar Rizvi and I moved away to the counter. Mr. Bhutto entered the V.I.P. lounge, where Karamatullah and Iqbal Quraishi got down to an exclusive story from him.

As we took our seats in the Fokker, we saw Haneef Soldier coming along. He waved good-bye to Mr. Bhutto from the tarmac. The aeroplane passed over Moenjo Daro and Larkana and was later flying over the arid mountains of Baluchistan. There were wastelands. desolate expanses, as far as the eye could see. As we landed at Samungli Airport, there was a chill in the air. Tahir Muhammad Khan, Amanullah Gichki, Yusuf Magsi, Ghaus Bakhsh Raisani, Saeed Abbas Zaidi and a large number of Quetta leaders and workers were present at the Airport. The discipline of those who had come

to receive Mr. Bhutto was gratifying. Theirs was not a disorderly crowd. Instead, they had all lined up in rows. Mr. Bhutto went round and waved his greeting to the people in response to their slogans. Then he disappeared into the Airport restaurant where he sat down surrounded by journalists.

Mr. Bhutto, first of all, thanked all those who had come to receive him and then said: "We are holding the session of our Central Committee in Quetta because the Baluchistan Province is very important to us.

It is a backward province. It has suffered great injustice in the past. If our struggle succeeds, Baluchistan will also definitely come into its own. The People's Party will fight for the rights of the poor people of the province. The common people will become masters of Baluchistan's resources that have been appropriated by a handful of persons. If Baluchistan gains power, its common people will automatically be the beneficiaries." Seated among the journalists, one could see Mr. Tahir of "The Pakistan Times". He is known for turning even an ordinary airport interview into a regular Press Conference. He hurled a volley of questions at Mr. Bhutto. The journalist left nothing untouched ranging from the Indian aggression to the PPP elections. Mr. Bhutto said: "We are prepared to make all sacrifices in the interest of the country's solidarity. The People's Party derives its strength from the common people. With the help of the people, we can challenge not only India but the entire world.". Referring to Mr. Bugti, Mr. Bhutto said: "I have family relations with him, but none of a political nature." In reply to a question on any future agreement between the PPP and NAP, Mr. Bhutto said: "There are always, in politics, such things as agreement and conciliation. But our Party is wedded to principles. We can come to terms with anyone, but any agreement with a bogus party of the NWFP is not only difficult but impossible." Talking of the formation of a Forward Bloc in Quetta, Mr. Bhutto said: "Forward Blocs are possible only within the Right Wing parties. How can there be such a bloc in a Left-Wing party?" On the issue of elections within the PPP, he said: "Who'll be more keen than I on this? But the time is not yet for these elections. At the moment, we are much too preoccupied with the country's basic problems."

Quetta City is six or seven miles away Samungli Airport. Those who had come to receive Mr. Bhutto returned by buses or trucks

and the guests got into the waiting motor-cars. Fasih Iqbal belongs both to Quetta and Karachi. The trouble with him is that he takes on the role of the host wherever he may be. He gave Ali Akhtar Rizvi and me a lift. Mr. Bhutto stayed at the Lourdes Hotel. Mr. Khar, Maulana Kausar Niazi, Dr. Mubashir Hasan, Hayat Mohammad Khan, Sherpao, Abdul Hafeez Pirzada, Rafi Raza and Rahim had also put up at the same hotel. Mir Rasul Bakhsh Talpur, Makhdum Zaman Talibul Maula, Nawab Zahid Ali Khan, Masud Zahidi, Qasim Chaudhri, Kamal Hussain Rizvi, Taj Muhammad Langa, Justice Faizullah, Khan Habibullah, Sher Muhammad Khan, Mian Mahmud Ali Kasuri, Sheikh Rashid, Afzal Wattoo and Sardar Aslam were staying at Baldia House. I also joined them. Mr. Hanif Ramay stayed with his relatives. Mairaj Muhammad Khan had come to Quetta by road along with his family. He stayed with his brother. The meeting started at 12.00 noon in Ali Manzil and went on till 4.00 p.m. It was decided that the journalists would be briefed at night. Mr. Imdad Husain Baloch, an important Party worker of Quetta was present outside the meeting-hall to act as guide to us. The Quetta workers are very well-organized revolutionaries and full of enthusiasm.

The participants in the meeting went to Farah Restaurant at 4-00 p.m. for lunch. This restaurant almost resembles Karachi's Cafe Grand. The restaurant is a beautiful, peaceful place. The second session of the meeting began at about 5.30 p.m. During the lunch interval, I went round the town in the company of Altaf Rana. Quetta is a small town and one can cover it in no time. I also looked in at the "Gosha-i-Adab" visited the markets and called at the simple dwelling of Khan Abdus Samad Achakzai, but he was not in.

Maulana Kausar Niazi, the PPP Information Secretary, briefed the journalists on the proceedings of the meeting at about 9-00 p.m. in one of the bed-rooms of Ali Manzil. He told them that only Mr. Khursheed Hasan Meer handn't been able to attend the meeting, out of the 127 members, owing to some other engagement. Some people had also been specially invited, including Rafi Raza, member of the PPP Constitution Committee; Amanullah Khan Gichki, President of Baluchistan PPP; from the Frontier came Habibullah, and Qasim Chaudhri and Kamal Husain Rizvi from East Pakistan.

Maulana Kausar Niazi told us that the meeting had discussed among other things, the country's situation conditions in the NWFP

and Baluchistan, with particular reference to the backwardness of the latter, administrative matters, the rule of terror and violence which is inevitable under a tribal dispensation, and the ways and means of expanding the PPP organisation in Baluchistan. He also told us that the Central Committee had endorsed the Chairman's announcement that the PPP should take part in the by-elections. The Maulana also disclosed that a committee had been formed to draw up guidelines for fighting the by-elections, with Mr. J.A. Rahim as its Chairman, other members being Mian Mahmud Ali Kasuri, Hayat Mohammad Khan Sherpao, Mustafa Khar, Maulana Kausar Niazi, Mairaj Mohammad Khan, Dr. Mubashir, Qasim Chaudhri and Kamal Husain Rizvi. This Sub-Committee held its meeting at 11-00 p.m. and submitted its recommendations the following day.

Maulana Kausar Niazi told us that Khan Abdus Samad Achakzai's letter had also been read out at the day's meeting, in which he had offered to explain his point of view before the Central Committee, and that an invitation had been extended to Khan Sahib for the purpose. The meeting had also discussed the Yahya-Bhutto talks.

Nawab Ghaus Bakhsh had arranged a dinner in honour of the delegates. He lives in a spacious bungalow, quite far from the town. There is extreme shortage of water in Baluchistan. No wonder, therefore, that one could see clouds of dust all over Nawab Raisani's residence. Fasih Iqbal had made sure that I should also attend the dinner-party. After dinner, I returned to Baldia House. The night was chilly. When I got up in the morning, I learnt that Farooq Mueen of PPI had also arrived by air.

The Central Committee's session was being held today over the show-room of the late Haji Fateh Khan. I went over to the "Gosha-i-Adab" and met Abid Bukhari. When I returned, Maulana Kausar Niazi came down at the end of the meeting and told the journalists that he had no special news to break for the time being. The journalists were, however, briefed between 8-00 and 9-00 p.m. I asked the Maulana to let us have the names of the members of the deputation that was going to visit East Pakistan, in case the members had been nominated. He gave us the names of the delegates: Mian Mahmud Ali Kasuri (Leader), Dr. Mubashir, Maulana Kausar Niazi, Malik Meraj Khalid, Mairaj Muhammad Khan, Abdul

Hafeez Kardar, Malik Muhammad Akhtar, Tariq Aziz and Kamal Azfar. The delegation was to stay in East Pakistan from October 10 to October 25 and take part in the electioneering campaign. Mr. Bhutto and some of his comrades lunched with Sardar Akbar Bugti. I went into the town to have a look round. Smuggled goods are sold in the open market in Quetta. People regard the merchandise as a windfall and there is always a buying-spree. There was a mad rush for the smuggled goods during our stay as well. These goods which have been brought over from Afghanistan and Iran on the sly by dare-devil smugglers, are all nicely displayed in the shops. But one must have a "Heavy purse," to go in for these things. It's all a matter of money. If one has the dough such goods can be had in Karachi too. One should only know how to look for them. To tell the truth, nothing in this line is impossible in this fair land of ours.

We learnt after the meeting in the evening that Mr. Bhutto was not going back the following day because the Central Committee's session had lasted too long and Mr. Bhutto had, therefore, not been able to address the Party workers. This meeting also decided that the National Assembly should be convened in December, otherwise, it was agreed, democracy could not be restored. This meeting took most of its time endorsing decisions that had been made at different levels of the Party.

The same night I bumped into Mirza Hamid Ali Beg, Director of Information, Baluchistan. When I was on the staff of the weekly "Qindeel", Mr. Beg was the king of Protocol" in West Pakistan. I used to come across him then quite frequently at different functions.

The following morning I learnt that Mr. Bhutto had left for Kalat to meet the Khan and that he would return in the evening and address the workers.

I took advantage of Mr. Bhutto's absence and called on Khan Abdus Samad Achakzai. His abode was unpretentious, very ordinary looking, in fact. He didn't have a drawing room, so called. I was shown into the 'Baithak' which is his drawing-room, study, and bed-room, combined into one. When I went in, I saw some of his devotees sitting around him.

When I returned from Khan Achakzai house, I proceeded to

Sardar Akbar Bugti's residence in company with Ali Akhtar Rizvi of the "Mashriq" and Farooq Mueen of PPI. We had made an appointment with him for 11 o'clock. Winding our way through several lanes, we finally landed at his house. His drawing-room opened on to a lane. Sardar Sahib rang the bell. In came a tribesman at the speed of a bullet, heard his master's order and retired forthwith. Every time the bell rang, the Baluchi would appear even before the ring came to an end, wearing his flowing 'Shalwar', big turban and luxuriant beard. We had a frank chat with the Sardar and he also spoke without any reservation. We had, as a matter of fact, come to a gentlemen's agreement that anything that passed between us would be treated as "off the record." But one of us, a senior journalist, broke the compact, disclosed the contents of our conversation and even added to it something of his own. The Press Trust has already earned a bad name. Maybe the worthy journalist was fishing for a 'pride of performance' certificate. We discussed all manner of subjects with Sardar Sahib for an hour or so and then took leave of him and proceeded to Baldia House. Coming from Sardar Bugti's residence to Municipal House, one sees tongas, rickshaws, children toiling hard to eke out their livelihood, and proud Baluchis who trudge from the suburbs to Quetta to earn a living. Going round Quetta one gets a feeling of desolation. This was my first visit to Quetta and I had formed a rosy picture of the town in my mind, but when you get to Quetta, you see misery all around. You will see fine foreign fabrics displayed in the shops but the common man can't afford this luxury. There is a glut of cosmetics in the market, but the faces of the poor are not defiled by these preparations. In Baluchistan, the faces of the people in general are as desolate as the mountains in the neighbourhood. We arrive at Baldia House and come across Cheeko, Babu and Ghafoor, all pictures of distress. The well-to-do people and tourists come to Quetta and go away, but this hapless trio is destined to stay here for ever to witness spring-time and brave winter chill which gets worse after snow-fall.

The day is slipping into a cold afternoon. The PPP workers are assembling in Haji Fateh Khan's show-room. There are Baluchis and Pathans and the refugees and Punjabis who live in Quetta. Workers have also arrived from other places in Baluchistan. One sees a great variety of dress but the people's eyes reflect common gloom and their faces collective determination. They all belong to

a community which has been ruthlessly exploited over the past 23 years. The Baluchistan PPP President, Amanullah Gichki, Secretary Zakaullah Lodhi, Treasurer Saeed Abbas Zaidi, Haji Ashraf, Qazi Faizul Haq and Imdad Husain are easily noticeable in the assembly. Amanullah Gichki pays tributes to Mairaj Mohammad Khan over the microphone and requests him to address the audience but, before handing him the microphone, Mr. Gichki says a few introductory words: "Mairaj Mohammad Khan was brought up, received his education in Quetta. He is no stranger to the people of Quetta. They are proud of the fact that a brave leader like Mairaj Mohammad Khan has had a close association with their town." As soon as Mairaj Mohammad Khan began to speak, Mr. Bhutto arrived and the entire audience burst into clapping to welcome their Leader. Haji Ashraf's children had been eagerly looking forward to meeting Mr. Bhutto. Each one of them shook hands with Mr. Bhutto and moved away except the little girl who stayed by the side of Mr. Bhutto like a bodyguard. Mairaj Mohammad Khan resumed his speech: "Mr. Bhutto's heart beats in unison with the heart of the common man whether he hails from the Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, the Frontier or Bengal. We'll fight for restoring the democratic rights of Baluchistan as we are doing in the case of other Provinces. Come what may, we'll get rid of the capitalists and feudal lords. Our democracy aims at bringing about economic freedom. We'll not let any part of Pakistan sever its connection with the mother country. I tell you, its only Socialism that can guarantee the country's unity. We are struggling to achieve economic emancipation. Lord Macaulay's system of education has given nothing to our people; it has only produced "black Britons." The countryside lacks enlightenment, and unless the rural population become conscious of their rights, we can't march forward; the nation cannot make any progress. Isn't it the height of tyranny to dispossess them of Mother Earth? My countrymen! It is your duty to retrieve the soil from usurpers. There is a limit to one's patience. The country's solidarity is bound up with the solidarity of the twelve crore people. If they are secure, the country will be secure. You must remember that a country's security cannot be conceived without the people's security."

"At the end of Mairaj Mohammad Khan's speech, Mr. Bhutto invites the Frontier PPP President, Mr. Hayat Mohammad Sherpao, to address the audience. Since Mr. Sherpao was indisposed, he

apologized to the people for not being able to address them. He said he would be only too glad to address them when he got well. And now Mr. Bhutto stands up to deliver his historic address:

"Friends, my countrymen! I came here last on June 12 and constituted an interim committee. We have heard the word 'interim' repeated so often that some thoughtless people have started regarding even Pakistan as an interim affair. But Pakistan is destined to live and to prosper. And let me remind you that an interim arrangement is not supposed to last long. Similarly, an interim government is not supposed to last more than five or six weeks. Well, I am here this time to convert the interim committee, I formed earlier, into a regular proper committee. Likewise, we want the Government to shed its interim character. Since its very inception, our party has been serving the common people's cause. Our party has fearlessly stuck to its guns and we have never budged an inch from our stand. I needn't tell you that there have been sundry political parties in this land. But I am not referring to the Quaid-i-Azam in this context. He is the rightly acknowledged Founder of Pakistan, the Father of the Nation. Whenever I talk of the deterioration in our politic, I don't have in mind either the Quaid-i-Azam or the Quaid-i-Millat. We can never pay adequate homage to the two great leaders. In their day, they fought tooth and nail to turn Pakistan into a model country. But afterwards, the Muslim League was divided into three groups, and remains so divided. But even if the three factions get together now, they would cut no ice. I have already said that these three dead bodies are being rolled into one coffin. The present Muslim League bears no resemblance whatever to the Quaid-i-Azam's Muslim League, Otherwise, it would have made it a point to serve the country's interests. It is not even the shadow of the original Muslim League. It has no regard for the Quaid-i-Azam's manifesto. By and by, there was a mushroom growth of political parties: Awami League, Muslim League One, Two, Three, PDP, Justice Party, Tehrik-i-Istiqlal none of them a party of the people. The Quaid-i-Azam had truly mobilised the masses. How? By upholding their cause, by voicing their sentiments and aspirations. But the political parties that came into being after the Quaid-i-Azam, attached no importance to the common people and started palace intrigues. They never paid any attention to what the common man wanted. They talked a great deal inside the

Assemblies, delivered wonderful speeches—in Urdu, English and Bengali. They would make plans, now one, now another—sitting in their drawing-rooms. They remained completely oblivious of what had been happening in Asian politics, they paid no need to the upheaval in the world. They were prisoners of self-interest. They wouldn't come out of their shells. They plunged the country into debt. They created disaffection and parochialism in the country. The political parties made the people fight each other, to keep their hold intact. They had, in fact, learnt their politics from the British whose policy was to 'divide and rule.' Our political parties refused to believe that this formula wouldn't work any longer, because the foreign rulers had packed up. These indigenous rulers, too, kept the people in the dark about the country's economic problems. They created dissension among the country's different communities. As regards the refugee problem, well, many other countries have had to face a similar problem, but they soon assimilated the refugees on a par with their original nationals. But we have so far failed to solve the refugee problem. And the solidarity of the country still hangs in the balance. Because the rulers have, one after another, resorted to petty intrigues and fanned parochialism. The Baluchis and the Pathans, and the Pathans and the Punjabis were made to fight each other. Now, they are all Pakistanis, Musalmans, and yet the racial distinctions have been perpetuated. If the resources of Baluchistan had been spent for the welfare of the Province, things would have been different. But the greedy rich, the swine, have been appropriating the wealth of the Province and will do so again if new resources are found. They will fly from Karachi to all the places where new minerals are found and take charge of them. Take fluoride for instance, which is being mined in Baluchistan. This substance is easily available even in Japan, but in Baluchistan itself, it is beyond the means of the parents of an ailing child who might be in dire need of it.

"If the resources of a region are usurped by men of influence, it is destined to remain poor. Sui Gas was found in Baluchistan, but have the poor people of Sui benefited by this find?

"But Pakistan is destined to undergo a change, to make great progress. Sui Gas has reached Karachi, Lyallpur, Lahore, Islamabad, but the people of Sui don't enjoy this amenity. I know that conspiracies are being hatched against us. I know what the politicians of

Sind , are up to. All these elements are arrayed against the People's Party, but even if our Party doesn't win, these conspirators will not be the gainers. Look at our newspapers, pouring out venom against us and spreading parochialism. O sons of the poor! be on your guard. These conspiracies are not directed against the People's Party; they are aimed at you. But let me say this: Even if the People's Party fails, the capitalists cannot come to power. Now, the common people cannot be subdued. They will not let the money-grubbers come to power. If the People's Party fails to form a Government, the present military regime is bound to continue. You are whipped by the present Government for such an innocent act as laughing. You will get four months in Jail for merely sneezing. I paid my humble tribute to the memory of Quaid-i-Azam at his mausoleum on the 11th, of September, but mind you, I was not supposed to open my mouth even on such an important occasion—because the Government had imposed a ban on public speeches, Do you call this freedom?

"Lakhs of people laid down their lives to achieve Pakistan. The chastity of innumerable women was outraged. The caravan of the refugees was 60 miles long. What for were all these sacrifices made? To establish an order based on social justice, to create a Pakistan dedicated to Islamic principles and freedom—freedom from poverty and exploitation. Conspiracies are being hatched against us in the Punjab too. Have a look at the newspapers and you will find out what is happening. How can Mukhtar Rana go against me? He is my brother. The poor chap is new to politics. He is unaware of the capitalists' intrigues. The People's Party will never betray the people. I will much rather die than be disloyal to the People's cause. I am a mere nobody. How can I implement my manifesto without coming to power? Even a great man like Mao Tse-tung couldn't put his manifesto into practice before he came into power. We are not going to go round with the beggar's bowl. I must repeat that it is only the capitalists, bureaucrats and the agents of capitalists who are plotting against us.

"Here is an English-language newspaper of Karachi which is owned by some capitalist. The paper alleges that I said, after Sardar Akbar Bugti's dinner party, that I had concluded no political agreement. I should like to know the reporter who has attributed this statement to me? The fact is that no newspaper correspondent has met me after I came away from the airport. I strongly protest

against this false reporting. It is a great shame that this kind of treatment has been meted out to me for several years. Our poor people are already confused. I would ask these newspapers not to confound them further. I am not afraid of anyone except God. I'll say what I please. I have been the target of Press attacks for three years now. There are plots afoot against me everywhere—in the Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan, the Frontier and East Pakistan. When the crisis is over, History will itself declare that we have not done anything to harm East or West Pakistan. Only time will tell how earnestly we have striven for the welfare of both Wings. Didn't we stand for democracy? We knew that if we failed, Martial Law would continue. We wanted to end violence and establish a people's government. There has been a large-scale propaganda against us. What sin has the People's Party committed to deserve this treatment? We sent a telegram to the Awami League but they said that they did not recognize the validity of our telegram. We went to East Pakistan in January. We talked to East Pakistan leaders and told them that it would take us a month to talk to the other leaders. And what reply did we get? "Six Points is all that we can offer you. Take them or leave them." I am releasing my book on East Pakistan on September 29, which I wrote in June. Since the writing of the book, some important developments have taken place. India and the Soviet Union concluded an agreement on August 9. Then came the White Paper on East Pakistan. My opinions about these matters are given in my book which will be translated into Urdu, Sindhi and Bengali. I must tell you that intrigues against us are rife in the Frontier also. Let our enemies unite against us. We are prepared to offer battle. In fact, we relish confrontation. I said at the mausoleum of the Quaid-i-Azam: 'O, my dear Quaid! Did you create Pakistan in order that we should have a military rule for thirteen years? Rest assured my Quaid, I regard it as my sacred duty to try to build the edifice of Pakistan according to the design laid down by you.' If anyone else dares accomplish this task, let him come forward. The people's enemies make bold to declare in the security of their drawing-rooms: "Oh, we are fed up with the military regime. God knows when we'll get rid of it!' O, defeated ones! How dare you dole out advice to us, while you are making yourself comfortable in Lahore,. I don't need your advice. I'll only seek the people's advice. Our enemies say: 'If you want power, acquire it through democratic methods.' Well, our methods have been democratic all along. We launched a popular

struggle against Ayub Khan and we won. We fought the elections, and we won again. But power was not transferred to the people even then. We have been insisting on a peaceful transfer of power. The rulers say: "We are in the saddle and we'll sit tight.' We want that the matter should be settled by democratic methods. Mere negotiations have taken place between March and September, Now, things have come to such a pass that there is no money in the State treasury. We have lost all prestige at the international level. It is quite usual in other countries that even the smallest affairs of State are thrashed out in Parliament. Parliaments enjoy public respect everywhere else. Policy-makers are strictly responsible to Parliament which can call upon them to explain the whys and wherefores of their desicions. In our country, it is the radio that rules supreme. We are supposed to gulp whatever is dished out over the wireless. This is not fair. The radio authorities are in duty-bound to take the listener into confidence. They should not deceive their audience. Take the Information Secretary. He cannot write even four sentences in English. Then how is the Information Ministry going to run? The rulers turn back and say to us: 'Who are you to ask questions?' It is our right to know what the Government is up to. If the 'man with one seat' enjoys the privilege of asking what is happening behind the scenes, why can't we? It is the right of our citizens to sit in judgement on the doings of the rulers. All right, forget the majority. Hand over the Government to 'Chapli Kabab.' Bhutto is a very ordinary man. He is the people's servant. Anyway our struggle is going on both inside and outside the Assembly. And it is more vigorous outside. If there are 300 people inside the Assembly, there are twelve crore outside. The people's representatives can be taken to task for wrongdoing. I have one foot inside the Assembly and the other outside. We are not going to leave the people in the lurch. These are no empty words. When the time comes, you will see how I face the enemy. Justice itself will challenge the enemies of the people, we are a nation of brave people, not so many mice. The nation can fight exploitation, get its legitimate demands fulfilled. I know this well. Now, what happened in Lahore? I am referring to the Yaqub Masih incident. He was one of my workers. I have been elected by the voters of his area. Don't ask me what I went through after that incident. Yaqub Masih's detractors used to call him 'Blackie.' But I tell you, he wasn't black of heart. Black-hearted are those who are framing the Constitution.

Well, didn't that Police Station come to grief? But we had no hand in the affair. Our enemies are labouring under the delusion that they can finish us off. And I tell you that no power on earth can do this, because the People's Party derives its strength from the brave people of Pakistan and the strength of the Party is synonymous with the country's strength, and I tell you that India also fears our might. The detractors of the PPP are like so many corpses. Now, what can dead bodies do for our country? It is no use wasting injections on Nasrullah Khan. It will prove a futile exercise. It is like flogging a dead horse. We respect Yahya Khan's pledges. He says is determined to establish democracy. Let's hope Parliament meets by the end of the year. The new year should be the year of Democracy. Otherwise, we'll have to do something. We have waited for a whole year. Things have been getting worse after the elections. My brave and proud Baluchis, my dear Pakistanis! Bhutto will not go to an air-conditioned jail. I'll fight in the open. I'll be the first to receive bullets. We are not fighting to encourage separatism, to divide the country. We are prepared to take on the battle, however unarmed we might be. Truth will be on our side. Ours is a genuine, legitimate struggle. No power can vanquish a movement which is dedicated to the rule of justice. O, sons of the poor! Quaid-i-Azam had conceived a Pakistan wherein democracy would be allowed to flourish. I warn you that if power is not transferred to the people in January and the matter is postponed to March or April, then God save Pakistan! Rains have come. And if it doesn't fall to the lot of a People's Government to present the new Budget, there will be no democracy and you will have to take things either lying down or you will sing in chorus Allama Iqbal's celebrated couplet which in a nut-shell says: 'It is better to starve oneself to death than accept sustenance which humbles one's pride.

"My young friends, labourers and labourers' sons! You have been subjected to untold atrocities. But, now, you have given your verdict as to who is to rule the country. You should stick to your guns. The future belongs to you. You have to break the shackles of misery, so that those who come after you, can lead a life, free from misery and oppression."

When Mr. Bhutto finished his address, the faces of peasants and labourers were beaming with satisfaction. I could see strong

determination reflected in their eyes.

Agha Ali Pledi gave a dinner for Mr. Bhutto. Khan Abdus Samad Achakzai and Yahya Bakhtiar attended the dinner party besides leaders of the local People's Party. Mr. Bhutto left for Karachi the following day and I stayed on.

Quetta mornings are dry and cold. I had been thinking of going out of Quetta to have a look at Baluchistan. Mr. Hamid Ali Beg had promised to take time off his engagements to accompany me. He drove to Baldia House early in the morning in his green Hillman. Altaf Rana and Faruq Mueen also joined us. On our way out of Quetta town, we confirmed our berths on the PIA flight the following morning. As soon as we came out of Quetta. we could see nothing but barren expanses and arid mountains. We were overpowered by a sense of loneliness and we felt as if everything had come to an end. After some time we saw the Baluchistan University which is gradually coming up after twenty - three long years. The various University structures look like so many tents in a desert. There is no vegetation, not much life. We have now the fountains of knowledge bubbling in a place which was a wasteland until yesterday. And tomorrow, this place will be throbbing with activity. There is a Check Post a little ahead of the University. This 600-mile road leads to Karachi. It passes by Kalat which is ninety miles away from Quetta. The Quetta-Karachi road is not all metalled. There is a fairly good strip as far as Kalat. The car is running fast. There is no sign of vegetation on either side of the road as far as the eye can reach. Only barren, mute mountains are in evidence. Someone tells us that these mountains are a continuation of the Murdar (Dead) Range. They look like the debris of a dead civilization. Poet Ahmad Faraz will seek for love in vain in the quiet of these unpopulated places. Nothing grows on these mountains. No film-makers ever visit these dreary expanses. There are no young damsels around. Only the toiling and brave Baluchis tread these lonely paths, leading their camels by the nose-string. They set out in search of their livelihood. The camels are loaded with stacks of dry fuel-wood. The camel-drivers are accompanied by their entire families, as they move from place to place. The family dog is always in attendance and is their sole bodyguard. These nomads have no permanent abode. They will sell this fuel-wood somewhere and buy their rations to keep the wolf from the door; rest awhile and move again in search of their liveli-

hood. The other visitors to these barren lands are bands of labourers, clad in militia, who make roads, winding through these mountains and deserts, with the help of their spades. There was a time when Baluchis went about these valleys, riding their horses or camels. But now, capitalists and feudal lords go past in their automobiles without having as much as a swift look at their surroundings. These idle rich have no longer any rapport with these areas. But the camel-drivers still love this land like their own mothers.

The Hillman was going fast and we saw gangs of labour widening the road in a hilly terrain. We had to go to Mastung first to have tea with the Commissioner of the Kalat Division, Mr. Irshad. As we arrived, we noticed a fair in progress. This was the final day of the festival. It was a poor people's fair where the common people sang folk-songs and bought and sold refreshments and hand-made goods.

One sees mud houses everywhere. One has a feeling of desolation, of loneliness in these surroundings exactly like the one we used to experience in Dacca as the curfew hour would draw near. We townees, given over to the hustle and bustle of urban life, feel out of sorts in this loneliness, but this loneliness, this desolation has become an integral part of the life of the rural folk. The Commissioner of the Kalat Division is staying at Mastung these days. He welcomes us at the Rest House. He is a man of simple habits and we see him dressed in simple clothes. We take our seats in his office. He hails from the Punjab, but has been serving in Baluchistan for a long time now, and knows about the problems of Baluchistan at first hand. He inquires of us what it is like in Karachi now in a manner as if we have arrived from another planet. Then he says: "I have got used to a dry life in Baluchistan, but don't know what you gentlemen, coming as you do from big towns, think of this region. Serving in Baluchistan has been a unique experience for me. Communications are our main problem. We have roads in very few areas. Journeys are mostly made on camel-back or on foot. It took us three days to collect the election results from certain areas. It was no easy task for the voters to reach the polling booths either. As regards the rushing of the result from the polling stations to the Divisional Headquarters, well, this is how we tackled the problem. As soon as results were compiled at a particular polling booth, they were handed over to a man with a camel. He would ride his camel and cover one section of the total distance

and then hand over the results to another camel rider until the results were finally picked up by a jeep waiting on the main road. That is why the results of the elections in Baluchistan were delayed."

The Commissioner continued: "If you journalists working in big towns can spare time and spend 20 to 30 days in Baluchistan, you will be able to form a correct picture of living conditions in the Province. You can then see for yourself what hardships the people of this region have to go through from day to day. The people of certain areas migrate to Sindh and other places temporarily every year in search of their livelihood. Very few people enjoy the facility of water-supply. Sinking of wells is a hard job because underground water is far below the soil. The people are jobless and sheep and goats are their sole possession. Please come over for a few days and live among your poor compatriots. We'll make arrangements for you to travel with a camel caravan bound for Kharan, for instance, in search of a living, and you will then find out for yourself how hard life is in these areas. The poor nomads would break their journey at the slightest prospect of getting some employment, do odd jobs and then buy their rations with their earnings. Work at a particular place over, the caravan would move on in search of pastures new. The truth of the matter is that these helpless nomads are never sure of their next meal."

Mr. Irshad's narrative was, indeed, touching and I said: "I am willing to come over whenever you feel like inviting me." He further told us that vast tracts of land were lying uncultivated for want of water. No wonder, the province was extremely sparsely populated. He said that there were no industries, although a fishing industry was now being set up at Gwadar. He hoped this will provide employment for some people in Baluchistan.

I interrupted him: "A certain politician has announced that twelve lakh rupees are being spent on a water-supply scheme for the twelve thousand people of Gwadar. On the other hand, not even a small amount of money has been earmarked to supply water for lakhs and lakhs of people in the dry areas."

Whereupon the Commissioner said: "The water-table in Gwadar is very near the soil. That's why that area has been given priority. Not only that. Schemes are being formulated to set up

an industrial estate in Baluchistan which is bound to have far-reaching effects on the economy of the province. The importance of water-supply in areas other than Gwadar has been recognized and schemes to that effect will be gradually taken in hand. At the moment, most of the attention is being paid to communications. This will facilitate completion of development projects later on, and there will be no difficulty in transporting the required machinery from one place to another. The condition of the greater part of the Quetta-Karachi road is satisfactory. There are several towns in Baluchistan which lack civic amenities. The Headquarters of the Kalat Division at Khuzdar has no cinema, with the result that the citizens are starved of entertainment."

Tea arrived in the meantime, and we helped ourselves to the biscuits and tea. We were supposed to lunch in Kalat which is only sixty miles or so from Mastung. And yet it seemed a long distance in the hot sun. We took leave of the Commissioner and left for Kalat in Mirza Hamid Ali Beg's Hillman which beg. n to run at eighty miles an hour. On our way, we again saw desolate tracts of land, barren mountains and gangs of labour, with spades in their hands, on either side of the road.

When I met the Khan of Kalat I asked him what was going on in Kalat and what had passed between him and Mr. Bhutto. The Khan seemed quite satisfied with his talks with Mr. Bhutto and paid tributes to his leadership. The Khan said: "I am very happy to have met Mr. Bhutto. I had heard that he is rather emotional. But when I talked to him, I found him to be a very wise and honest soul and a true statesman. He doesn't mince matters, he speaks the truth. If he is given a chance, he is sure to lead the country to victory against all odds." The Khan of Kalat endorsed Mr. Bhutto's view that Pakistan was losing prestige abroad. He also felt sure that Yahya Khan would transfer power to the people's representatives, because he genuinely believed that this was the right thing to do. Khan Sahib added: "We, the Baluchis, think many a time before we lend our support to anyone. But once we make up our mind, we go the whole hog." On a reference to the Quaid-i-Azam, the Khan of Kalat's eyes filled with tears, and he spoke in a subdued tone: "Oh, he was a great leader, without a peer. The Quaid-i-Azam once stayed at the Rest House where you just had your lunch. He loved me dearly. He had a great regard for the Baluchis. Khan Sahib

reminded us: "It is due to the bravery of the Baluchis that we ruled over Kalat for 300 years, although we had to contend with the rulers of the Sub-Continent, on the one hand, and Russia, on the other."

As we said good-bye to the Khan of Kalat, he implored us to pray for the security and solidarity of Pakistan because there was nothing more precious.

We left Kalat at dusk, and complete darkness enveloped us by the time we had travelled about ten miles, like the long night of oppression which has enveloped the poor people of Pakistan. We saw some dim lights after a journey of 50 or 60 miles, which looked like rays of hope. Well, we got to our destination in Quetta all right, guided by those lights, but the rays of hope that are visible in the corridor of Pakistan's history have not yet led us to our final goal.

The following day, I flew to Karachi. This journey proved a boon for Farooq Mueen because he had acquired a 'companion', but I was destined to travel all alone.

The Darkest Month

This journey, you know, began quite some time ago, and you have yourself witnessed its progress. The first phase of the journey came to an end in December, 1970, and then West Pakistan went over to meet East Pakistan, full of goodwill for the other Wing and hopes of reconciliation. The visitor carried no bullets. March, 1971, was the darkest month of our history when lakhs of Pakistanis were killed by their own compatriots. The blood of the victims still flows. It is difficult to say who died a martyr in the cause of the country and who fell a victim to thoughtless public rage. But the fact remains that countless innocent sons of the soil perished. Innumerable habitations were destroyed. A gulf of hatred was created between the two brothers. We are licking our wounds even eight months after the holocaust. The bureaucracy and an unrepresentative and inefficient Government have tarnished our national image abroad, and the enemies have taken advantage of our predicament and stepped-up their propaganda against our country.

The journey is being made through a labyrinth, but it proceeds apace. We haven't given up hope, lost courage. But the journey has no doubt become more frightful.

We hear the same voice resounding again that aroused the people from their slumber, the people inhabiting this fair land stretching from the Khyber to Karachi. This voice was heard again in Karachi after March 14 and September 11, 1971. Mr. Bhutto flew from Karachi to Cairo on October 23. He also visited Geneva, Paris, Rome and Peking. He addressed mammoth gatherings at Karachi, Rawalpindi, Lala Musa, Gujrat, Lahore, Sahiwal, Multan, Bahawalpur, Rahimyar Khan, Nawab Shah and Hyderabad. One cannot say how long the journey is and how long it will continue. During his tours, Mr. Bhutto's public meetings were attended by multitudes of people. They listened to him with rapt attention. He was given a rousing

reception wherever he went on his electioneering campaign and he received a public ovation when he went round the country thanking the voters for supporting the Pakistan People's Party. And when Mr. Bhutto returned from his historic tour of a great friendly country—The People's Republic of China—a country that has stood by the side of Pakistan at all difficult times and is committed to the principles of international justice and equity lakhs of people, including men, women and children, greeted him in every town he visited, because they were convinced that he was their only saviour. But what a pity that a People's Government is nowhere in sight even after a whole year since the elections took place. But the common people are full of courage and determination and will, on a single call from their Leader, come out on the streets and overpower their enemies, both internal and external.

When I arrived at the Hyderabad railway station at 6-00 a.m. I learnt that the train was running late by three hours. Large crowds, including Haris, and students displaying the National Flag of China and Mr. Bhutto's photographs, had started pouring in. It was announced that the train would arrive at 9-00 a.m. The railway station was thronged with Mr. Bhutto 's admirers. The people made a dash for the compartment in which Mr. Bhutto was travelling. He came to the doorway of his compartment and waved to the greeting crowds, and made a short speech. Mir Rasul Bakhsh Talpur, President of the Sindh PPP, boarded the train at Hyderabad to accompany Mr. Bhutto. Subsequently, the train stopped at the Kotri Railway Station where large crowds were present to welcome Mr. Bhutto. The Sindhis and the refugees together raised slogans greeting their Leader. The train stopped at Kotri for quite at while, and Mr. Bhutto addressed the people at some length. We learnt that Mr. Daultana was also travelling by the same train. Farooq Mueen, Najmul Hasan and Altaf Rana rushed to his compartment marked "Ladies compartment", and came away because they had no mind to talk to purdah—observing ladies. After Kotri, the train moved rather slowly because the railway line was being repaired at several places. These repairs had been going on for a long time and there was no knowing when they would come to an end.

We have now reached Jung Shahi and large crowds are again in evidence. They are eagerly waiting for Mr. Bhutto to say a few words, but it is not possible to reach the microphone for Mr. Bhutto

on account of the rush. He returns to his compartment after promising the waiting people that he will come again on the 14th. The train resumes its journey but after a while suddenly comes to a stop. The organisers of the reception finally reach Mr. Bhutto, equipped with a microphone. Mr. Bhutto comes out of his compartment and addresses the audience. The Haris and the students in the crowd are overjoyed at the sight of their leader and seem to be taking in every word that he utters. I think to myself "Mr. Daultana must be in a serious predicament. I shouldn't wonder if he collapses after the rousing reception given to Mr. Bhutto by so many men full of courage and determination. I wouldn't be surprised if Mr. Daultana gets off before the train reaches Karachi" The train suddenly comes to a halt this side of the Drigh Road railway station. We can't make out why the train should have stopped. But presently, Mr. Daultana is seen slipping away, and I call out to photographer Rana: Look, my friend, Daultana has given us the slip. Quick! Take a snap." Rana rushes after Mr. Daultana and then, passing below a goods train, stands right in front of him. Some people are heard shouting: "There goes the mouse!" As Mr. Bhutto sees Mr. Daultana running away, through the window of his compartment, he remarks: "What brand of leaders, these, who are afraid of the common people!"

Mr. Daultana goes over to Drigh Road and stands alongside waiting for a taxi. The train starts moving and Altaf Rana, Hasan Bozai (photographer on the staff of the "Sun") and I say good-bye to Mr. Daultana and board the train. The train is about to reach the Cantonment railway station and we hear slogans being raised. The crowd at the station is not as large as we had expected it to be. But there was a reason for this: the main crowd had been stopped outside the railway station. A truck was waiting outside to fetch us and the Police and the People's Guard, had made a passage for us in the crowd from the train to the waiting truck.

We hurried off to the truck and took our seats. The procession now started moving. It passed through the Empress Road and Victoria Road and terminated at Fawwara Chowk. Here, Mr. Bhutto addressed the people who had come from far and near to hear their beloved Leader. Mr. Bhutto goes on saying:

"India made plans to dismember Pakistan, but the unity of our people defeated her designs. India is labouring under the delusion

that we are weak. Jagjivan Ram makes the boast: 'We are going to overrun Pakistani cities.' I say: Jagjivan Ram! you will be attempting the impossible. If there is another war, our civilian population will also fight, side by side with our Armed Forces.

If there is another war in the subcontinent, it will prove to be a decisive factor in the destiny of the region.

Indira Gandhi is reported to be trumpeting that we have come back empty-handed from China. Why should I disclose what passed between us and the Chinese leaders? We are not prepared to put our cards, on the table and this is in confirmity with the country's interests.

Decisions relating to the future of the subcontinent will not be made in Moscow, Vienna or Paris but on the soil of the subcontinent itself.

Indira Gandhi has said how can she negotiate with a non-political party in Pakistan. I should like to tell her that a People's Government is going to be formed in Pakistan in a month or so. She can then talk to us, if she so wishes, if she contemplates giving battle, well, she is welcome to it; we refuse to be browbeaten by threats. We have acquired this country after innumerable sacrifices and we refuse to take orders from any quarter. In any case, we are not going to submit to Indian hegemony. Indira Gandhi would be well-advised to lay down her arms and then talk to us. If there is another war in the subcontinent, it would be a decisive thing.

Indira Gandhi has been carrying on propaganda to the effect that we have got nothing from China and that I have returned empty-handed from that country. Even if what she says were true, what has she herself got from the Soviet Union? By entering into an agreement with the USSR, she has bartered away her country's freedom and she stands enchained. This country has had a goodly experience of agreements with big powers. Mrs. Indira Gandhi will surely live to rue the day when she ratified the agreement with Russia.

Our friendship with China flows from History itself. We don't have, therefore, to prop it up with things like agreements or joint communiques. China is our Comrade. Truth and justice are on our side. China firmly believes in the principle of non-interference

in the internal affairs of other countries. And our Party upholds the same principle. This is one of the five Bandung principles.

The Pakistan People's Party believes in mass contact and we have all along been in close touch with the common people, because no achievement is possible if one is cut off from the man in the street. The common people have rejected those political parties that have remained isolated from them, and have voted in large numbers for the People's Party. The defeated elements say that the People's Party enjoys majority in only two Provinces. I ask them: Does Pakistan consist of twenty Provinces, and do they have majority in ten Provinces?

Now, six defeated political parties have set about forming an alliance. Good luck to them! But they must remember that our unity is also being fortified. And we believe in the unity of peasants, labourers, students, intellectuals, journalists, poor employees of the Government and petty shopkeepers. The alliance of the defeated parties is a "paper coalition" which they are going to offer to the people as the Eid gift. Our unit flourishes in the factories, schools, fields and the streets. Our politics is the people's politics. We do not resort to palace intrigues because we operate in close association with the common people.

Many so-called heroes emerged after the 1965 war. Each one of them had the cheek to say that it was he who had won the war. Where are those gentlemen now? The country again stands in danger. Why don't those erstwhile heroes come to the country's rescue? The country is still in a serious predicament and the situation in East Pakistan is complicated.

After the elections, we put forth our demand that power should be transferred to the people's elected representatives, because only these representatives can overcome the political crisis and solve political problems. The defeated parties have accused the People's Party of being power-hungry. It is these parties that are clamouring for the transfer of power ahead of President's schedule. We fail to understand the principles underlying their logic. Even the Government has come to realise that there has been considerable delay in the transfer of power That's why things are being done in a hurry. The session of the National Assembly will be held on December 27,

and a new Government will take over immediately after the session, because three or four persons cannot run such a big Government.

I wish to make it clear that even if we come to power, we will not be wearing any crown. The country's treasury lies empty. Economic crisis is inevitable. We shall have to work, day and night, and work hard.

The People's Party will not enter into a coalition with a Government of any group of defeated parties. I say again that we'll topple any such Government in forty days with the co-operation of the people. Our victory and a People's Government is inevitable. It may not be formed now and here but it will be established pretty soon. And as soon as we come to power, we shall put an end to dismissals and ejectments.

A conspiracy is brewing at the moment with the intention of creating hatred between Sindhis and Muhajirs, if the People's Party comes to wield power. My dear brothers! For God's sake be on your guard and don't fall a prey to such intrigue. Please never fight each other. The poor Sindhis and the poor Muhajirs are brothers; all, and they have common problems.

We need only the common people's sympathy and co-operation. We have to overcome internal crisis and external problems. If our intentions are good and we don't give way to greed, there is no reason why we should not be able to turn Pakistan into a model country, a big Islamic country, which should be the envy of the entire world. When I go abroad and see the people prospering and making great progress, I say to myself: Why is life in Pakistan so hard to live? Why are the poor people perishing in this country? Why these soaring prices? I visited China again recently after a lapse of six years. And I saw even greater progress this time in all walks of life: the children looked perfectly healthy: education was available to each and every child of school-going age. God willing, we shall also turn Pakistan into an advanced and prosperous country.

A People's Government is nowhere in sight in spite of the fact that a whole year has gone by since the end of the elections. But I am sure it will not be long now before we have such a Government. We demand a People's Government as a matter of right and not by way of a donation or charity. If the People's Government comes to

power, you will be able to judge for yourselves how we honour our commitment and serve the people, because our strength will be synonymous with the people's might.

The country's poor people, the labourers, Haris and students have been victims of a great many excesses. Their hardships are on the increase. The People's Government would put an end to their deprivations. I am well aware that conspiracies have begun to be hatched even before we have reached the helm of State.

It is our duty to form a Government and discharge the responsibilities of a vigilant administration. And we have the people's mandate to go ahead. The Pakistan People's Party will never agree to a coalition with any Government of the defeated politicians. And if ever a Government of the defeated elements comes into being, it will not last for more than forty days. We'll get rid of it, sure enough.

We don't want to go to war with India, but she thinks that now is the golden opportunity to take advantage of the situation in Pakistan. We are a brave nation and if India starts a war, it will be a people's war on our side in the real sense. And if the situation in the subcontinent deteriorates, it will be followed by repercussions throughout the whole world. India must remember that Pakistan doesn't stand alone; it has friends and supporters.

Conspiracies are being hatched to play the Sindhis off against the Muhajirs in Sind, but such plots will bear no fruit. The poor Sindhis and Muhajirs will not give in to enemy designs. My dear friends! We need all your co-operation to combat these intrigues.

Ever since we entered politics, we have been striving hard to serve the people. We have tried hard to make our people conscious of their rights. We have added a new chapter to the country's politics. The poor people had no place in the country's politics until recently. They have had no say in the running of State affairs. It cannot be denied that the People's Party has also contributed its mite to political awakening in the country. And, in fact, it is the common man's political consciousness that has made us win the elections. But it is a shame that a people's Government has not come to power even a year after the election results. However, the President of Pakistan has done the right thing now by calling a session of the National Assembly for the 27th of December."

Three Days In Peking

Since I had to go to China with the President of Pakistan (Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto), my passport was ready in a matter of two hours.

When we flew from Karachi to Rawalpindi, the aeroplane was full of V.I.P.S. The President of Pakistan had, some time ago, instructed the Governors and Ministers to travel Economy class and since then I have seen several PIA planes without any first-class berths. Those travelling by this aeroplane included the Governor of Sind, Minister for Communications, Minister for Food and Agriculture, Minister for Cultural Affairs, the Khan of Kalat, Makhdum Talibul Maula, Mr. Bhutto's son and daughter and journalists Ahmad Ali Khan, Ashab Naqvi, M.A. Zubairi and Shaikh Ali Ahmad, all bound for Peking. We were put up at Hotel Intercontinental in Rawalpindi, because the visa formalities had to be gone through. Besides, the Director of External Publicity, Mr. Maqbool Bhatti, was supposed to brief us before our departure for China. He talked of the ABC of China's history and then of the various stages of Pakistan-China relations. This served as a useful refresher course. He also gave us a few tips on shopping in China, but he forgot to mention the weather. When his attention was drawn to the Chinese weather, he said: "Oh, yes. It's extremely cold in China at the moment. Snow-fall has been reported. So, you gentlemen should go there fully prepared against the cold spell." Well, I had brought enough warm stuff from Karachi. Since my friend, Mr. Mansur Qaisar, had taken charge of me on my arrival, I didn't feel like a stranger in Rawalpindi. Our two-days' stay in Rawalpindi, with its drizzly weather, proved helpful because we got a foretaste of what was in store for us in China. We were cooped up in our hotel till Sunday afternoon on account of the cold

drizzle. Suddenly we learnt that President Bhutto was going to address a Press Conference. As we were getting ready to go over, Radio Pakistan started broadcasting martial tunes and we were rather taken aback. So were the Rawalpindi journalists who were present on the occasion. Then, instead of the new bulletin at 5-00 p.m., we heard this: "Please wait for an important announcement." This nonplussed us completely. Then we heard over the radio that Pakistan had quitted the Commonwealth. And we felt slightly relieved. The Press Conference also revolved round the Commonwealth question.

We were advised to report at the Islamabad Airport at 5-30 the following morning (January 31), At 4-45 a.m., our host, Information Officer Ali Ahmad, came to fetch us. We reached the airport in drizzling weather. Our departure was entered in our passports. Soon after, we were asked to go and take our seats in the airliner. As soon as Mr. Bhutto arrived it was announced that the aeroplane was about to take off. We were airborne at 6-30 a.m. It was drizzling and fairly dark. Very few persons had turned up to bid us farewell on account of the chilly weather. The first compartment of the aeroplane carried official and non-official members of the delegation. Mr. Bhutto, Begum Bhutto and Murtaza Bhutto had taken their seats in the second compartment and the third compartment accommodated the staff of the Commander-in-Chiefs of the Army, Air Force and Navy and working journalists. The atmosphere in this compartment was particularly lively because the journalists were having jokes with one another, with Mr. Burki of "The Pakistan Times" being in top form. Our Air Hostess was an accomplished lady and looked very cheerful and friendly. A list of the parties aboard the Peking-bound aeroplane is given below:

1. **The President and his entourage**

President Bhutto; Begum Bhutto; Mr. Rafi Raza, Special Assistant; Major-General M. Ishaq, Military Secretary to the President; Mr. M.M. Ahmad, Adviser on Foreign Loans; Lieutenant-Colonel Dr. Mohyuddin, President's Physician; Lieutenant-Commander Khalid Mahmud Shafi, A.D.C. to the President; Mr. Khalid Hasan, Press Secretary to the President; Mir Ghulam Murtaza Bhutto, the President's son; and Nur Muhammad, Personal Attendant of the President.

2. **The Army Delegation**

Lieutenant-General Gul Hasan, Commander-in-Chief; Brigadier Muhammad Akram Khan; Captain Mohammad Yunus, A.D.C. to the C-in-C; Lieutenant-Colonel Manazir Husain; and Lieutenant M.S. Anwar.

3. **The Air Force Delegation**

Air Marshal A. Rahim Khan, Commander-in-Chief; Begum Rahim Khan; Air Commodore Zulfiqar Ali Khan; Air Commodore Sheikh M. Said; and Wing Commander Najib A. Khan.

4. **The Navy Delegation**

Rear-Admiral H.H. Ahmad, Acting Commander-in-Chief; Commander Matinur Rahman; Commander Habib Ahmad; and Commander Anwar Qureshi.

5. **Foreign Office Delegation**

Mr. Aziz Ahmad, Secretary-General; Mr. Sultan Mohammad Khan, Secretary, Foreign Affairs; Mr. Aftab Ahmad Khan, Director General; Mr. Maqbool Ahmad Bhatti, Director-General, External Publicity; Mr. Riaz Ahmad, Cabinet Division; Mr. Ahmad A. Kamal, Director; and Mr. S.A. Jafri, Section Officer.

6. **Political Members**

Mr. Mahmood Ali, Adviser on Political Affairs; Khurshid Hasan Mir, M.N.A.; Sardar Khair Bakhsh Mari, M.N.A.; Talibul Maula, M.N.A.; Col. Habib Khan, M.N.A.; Ahmed Yar Khan of Kalat; Faiz Ahmed Faiz; Badiul Hasan Zaidi; and Saifur Rahman Kayani.

7. **Press Party**

Cameraman Muhammad Ikram, Photographer Zafar Iqbal, Chaudhri Iftikhar Ali (APP), A. Rizvi (PPI), Ashab Naqvi (The "Sun") Shaikh Ali Muhammad (The "Hilal-i-Pakistan"), Nasim Ahmad (The "Dawn", London), H.K. Burki ("The Pakistan Times"), Mahmood Sham (The "Musawat"), Mir Jameelur Rahman (The "New Times"), Ajmal Khatak (The "Shabbaz"), Iftikhar Yusuf (The "Nida-i-Haq"), M.A. Zubairi (The "Business Recorder"), S.K. Pasha (The "Morning News"), and Ahmad Ali Khan (The "Dawn", Karachi).

8. **Radio and Television Contingent**

Safdar Ahad (Radio Pakistan). The following T.V. staff had reached Peking two days earlier: Zubair Ali, Chief News Editor; Shuja Nawaz, Producer; Cameraman Nisar A. Mirza; Zamir Mirza; Ahmad Nasim Shamsi, sound Engineer; and Mursaleen Khan, lighting Engineer.

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It was dark outside the aeroplane. There was light in the interior. It was all quiet outside but life pulsated inside. As we drew nearer and nearer to Peking, the horizon became brighter and brighter. The East is the source of light. As we go away from the West, the light draws nearer both in respect of time and figuratively. Peking has now became the foundation of light. The rays of this light have crossed Africa and Asia and penetrated as far as Europe. We are leaving darkness behind and moving towards light. There are clouds on the firmament as far as the eye can reach. We were told that we would be travelling 2200 kilometres and flying at altitudes ranging between 37000 and 39000 feet.

We were now flying at an altitude of 37000 feet. We had probably passed over K-2 and Nanga Parbat. Mr. Khalid Hasan, Press Secretary to the President, came from the cockpit and informed us that we had entered the air space of Great China after a flight of 31 minutes via Gilgit. On hearing this news, the entire Press party stood up as a sign of respect. Mr. Khalid Hasan told us that we were flying at an altitude of 37000 to 39000 feet and that we would touch down at Peking at 11-00 a.m. according to West Pakistan Standard Time and at 2-00 p.m. according to Peking Time. We had to go north-east and then eastward to reach Peking. When we cross the Pakistan border, Kashghar lies on our left. I can't see Kashghar from the aeroplane but I am put in mind of Allama Iqbal's celebrated couplet which means: "Let the Muslims inhabiting the region stretching from the banks of the Nile to the soil of Kashghar, become united in order to guard the 'Kaa'ba." President Bhutto has in a matter of seven days travelled from the banks of the Nile to Kashghar. He doesn't probably remember this couplet, otherwise he would have quoted it as during his electioneering campaign he had been quoting Iqbal's verse: "Rise and wake up the poor people of my world" and gone round addressing the poet in the spirit in these words: "My dear Sir! I have indeed roused

the poor people of Pakistan to action." It is no longer election time, otherwise President Bhutto could have also well said: "My revered Poet of the East! I am proceeding to Kashghar, having visited the banks of the Nile in Egypt, and Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Algeria, Turkey and Iran. I have translated your dream into action."

Sunshine now penetrates the aeroplane. Ashab Naqvi who is sitting near the window, says that he can see a vast desert far below the airliner. The passengers have started having some refreshments; the PIA stewards are serving coffee and cigarettes. The destination is drawing near and everyone is getting ready to disembark. From the aeroplane we can see the entire landscape covered with snow-fields, houses, roads are covered with thick, snow. The aeroplane's announcer tells us that we are about to land at Peking shortly. The temperature is well below freezing point. The aeroplane has landed. The Peking airport is cover with snow.

We see some guards on duty here and there. The aeroplane has landed in front of the airport building. The spectacle around us is a riot of colour. Young army men and children have turned up despite the heavy snow-fall and their faces are beaming with delight. There was only one passage leading out of the aeroplane, so that the Chinese leaders should be able to meet every member of the delegation. A large number of the Chinese had come to welcome us. We didn't understand their language but we could well make out from their spirited slogans, how happy they were to greet us. The sons and daughters and young men of a great nation had come to receive the leaders and journalists of a defeated nation which was full of resolve to make amends and build its country all over again. It is difficult to measure the large-heartedness of the Chinese and the vast expanses of their great country. The great leader of the great people of China, Mr. Chou En-lai, was standing close to the ladder and shaking hands with every member of the Pakistani delegation. If it had been the Prime Minister of some other country, he would have forthwith left the airport in company with the President of Pakistan. But Mr. Chou En-lai greeted every member of the Pakistan delegation and made it a point to shake hands with him. The faces of Chou En-lai and his comrades betrayed signs of old age, but the handshake of the leaders was still firm. The other personalities who shook hands with us were no other than the Vice-Chairman of the Military

Commission, Mr. Ye Sheng Yung; Vice-Premier of the State Council, Mr. Shen Nen; Director of the General Political Department of the People's Liberation Army, Mr. Lee Teh Shing; Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, Mr. Komojo, Vice-Chairman of the Peking Municipal Corporation, Mr. Do Teh; and Chinese Foreign Minister Mr. Chi Peng Fe.

When I disembarked at Peking, it was two minutes past two according to Peking Time. Every sensible man of the twentieth century dreams of visiting China because that great country is a shining example of self-reliance and tireless effort. Although China had remained isolated for a pretty long time, it has succeeded in making its importance felt everywhere by virtue of constant hard work. And now the majority of the United Nations Members has had to endorse China's admission to the world forum. The President of America, Mr. Nixon, is himself going to China to meet her leaders. In this modern world, composed of interdependent countries, China has carved a place of honour for herself and she is now reckoned as a world Power.

We now hear the Pakistan National Anthem. Everyone stands at attention as a mark of respect to the Anthem. The nation of 80 crore people is playing the National Anthem of the 12 crore people of Pakistan, seven crores of whom have surrendered to the enemy. Now is being played the National Anthem of 80 crore people. And everyone has come to attention. One notices endless friendliness all round. The nation of 80 crore people expresses its deep regard for the representatives of the five crore people. A large contingent of the Chinese has turned up to greet friends in response to the call of the leaders of China. A contingent of the Chinese Army, Air Force and Navy, presents a Guard of Honour to the President of Pakistan. Behind the contingent can be seen rows upon rows of Chinese adults and school-children, all dressed in colourful clothes for the occasion. The children are carrying bouquets and their rosy cheeks are full of smiles. The five-thousand strong representing 80 crore Chinese is raising slogans endorsing "Pak-China Friendship." Some of the people are carrying banners inscribed with slogans like "Salute to the Pakistani people's resistance to foreign aggression", "We support Pakistan's stand", "Long live the unity of Afro-Asian people", "Long live the unity of the common people of the world."

Mr. Bhutto and his party wave to the Chinese in response to their warm greeting. A similar welcome was accorded to Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan also in the hope that they would stand by their nation, but those rulers betrayed their people, and the real sentiments of the Chinese nation failed to be conveyed to the people of Pakistan. Nor was the welfare of the common people of Pakistan kept in view.

It is extremely cold at Peking airport. We have loaded ourselves with much warm stuff and we are wearing woollen caps coming down to our ears. Premier Chou En-lai moves about bare-headed. But he is wearing an overcoat, so is Mr. Bhutto. Besides the Chinese people and representatives of foreign missions, members of the Pakistan Embassy in China and other Pakistanis have come to receive Mr. Bhutto and are shaking hands with Pakistani leaders. I feel rather small in the presence of the dynamic sons and daughters of a hard-working, proud nation. But I also derive strength from the thought that if a country is self-reliant, it can surely become a great Power, and can inspire its people with confidence and self-respect and this thought warms me up in the chilly weather.

The President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of China have taken their seats in a black motor-car of Chinese make. The car is flying the national flags of Pakistan and China. As the cavalcade is about to move, a Chinese friend brings us a few cards. There was a separate card for every member of the Pakistan delegation, bearing the number of the Car allotted to him and the name of his hotel and the number of his room in the hotel. These entries had been made in Chinese and English. A blue car of Chinese make, "Shanghai" by name, had been earmarked for us. The journalists were put up at Peking hotel. The numbers of the cars had been pasted in red on the wind-screens and a separate car had been reserved for every two guests. As soon as we occupied the motor-cars, the caravan started moving out of the airport. We were soon travelling on the right side of a two-way road. Traffic in China keeps to the right; so China is "Rightist" in one respect and falls in line with America. We saw tall trees on either side of the road and in the middle of it. There had been a heavy snowfall and everything was snow-clad except the road. The trees looked autumn-stricken and their branches were covered with particles of snow instead of green leaves. We saw guards of the People's Army on traffic duty along the road. Traffic

was almost nil on account for the inclement weather but a few persons were seen riding their bicycles on a road meant for that purpose. On our way, we saw traffic booths made of glass, from where traffic constables control the traffic. The traffic constable were wearing warm caps, full-sleeve green waistcoats, blue, breeches-like trousers and a white arm band inscribed with something in Chinese. This is the uniform of the Chinese traffic police. A friend of mine. Ahfazur Rahman, told me that China had no police other than the traffic police. On our way, we saw electric buses parked on one side of the road and waiting for passengers. The road was very wide and the long rows of trees looked very attractive. I was so lost in my snow-laden surroundings that I took no notice of the presence of Mir Jameelur Rahman of the "New Times". When I came out of my reverie, I realized that he was busy taking in the scene through the eye of his camera. He had been to China already. Peking City was a good distance from the airport—twenty five miles or thereabouts. Our cavalcade was also pretty long. As we entered the city, we saw a much wider road; it was so wide that it would be hard to conceive of such a wide road in Pakistan. The Chinese are a large-hearted nation and their roads and buildings are spacious.

Whosoever comes to China for the first time does so with a certain amount of misgiving but when he actually reaches China, he doesn't feel like a stranger. The flats, trees, houses, roads and lanes in China are similar to those in Pakistan. In fact, the brick houses remind one of the brick dwellings in the Punjab. As we moved forward, we saw several roads and the portraits of Stalin and Lenin displayed on the roadside. A little ahead, we came to a square which seemed rather familiar to me. Mir Jameelur Rahman confirmed my conjecture that the place was no other than the Tinin Min Square from where Mao Tse-tung takes the salute. He pointed to a splendid building at some distance and said: "Look That's the People's Great Hall." Further ahead, we saw portraits of Marx and Engels on the roadside. Then suddenly we heard a Punjabi tune emanating from either side of the road. Peking's biggest highway was resounding with "Sammi meri Jan, main wari (Punjabi folk song)". Mir Jameelur Rahman told me that the music was coming to us through loudspeakers fixed to the trees and poles. As we moved forward, we saw large numbers of Chinese young men, boys and girls

carrying garlands bouquets, and banners and sporting multi-coloured handkerchiefs and performing a dance. The following slogans were inscribed on the banners waving over the road:

"We support Pakistan's resistance to foreign aggression"; "we extend a hearty welcome to the celebrated leaders of Pakistan"; "Long live the magnificent unity of the Afro-Asia people"; "Long Live Pak-China friendship."

I was wondering what ideas these great sons of a great nation had formed of us. They would bend themselves to have a good look at the guests in the motor-cars and wave their greetings to them. Their faces were full of innocent smiles. There were old men, young men, little boys and girls, with narrow eyes and broad foreheads. They had all come out to extend to us a warm welcome, not because we belonged to a great country, a victorious nation, a thriving community, but because their leaders regard Pakistan as their friend. These people have full faith in their leaders who have made unique sacrifices to end foreign rule and wipe out all brands of exploitation. That is why the people at large have come out on the street, to welcome the guests from Pakistan in response to the call of their leaders. The crowds were busy in conversation in the Chinese language.

Our motor-cars have now entered the State Guest House. This too is a vast building. There are foot-paths, roads, halls. We enter a hall after hanging our caps and overcoats on the hat-rack. This is the first time that I am seeing the inside of a building in China. The official delegation take their seats in one of the halls; we sit on the other side. We can smell the aroma of Chinese tea, "Jasmin". We are seated amidst world figures, among personalities who are changing the course of world history. Premier Chou En-lai counts among three or four history-makers of the world. Hand-shakes and exchanges of greetings take place. The President of Pakistan is about to retire for a short rest. We proceed to Peking Hotel in our motor-cars. The people who had turned up to greet us are now going back and we can hear their merry laughter and friendly chat. Peking Hotel is a spacious building with three wings. There are big dining-halls and reception rooms, wide corridors and spacious stores. The hotel waiters and waitresses, dressed in white tunics and blue trousers, go about their work briskly, cheerfuly. The wooden

stair of the hotel reminds one of the stairs of old oriental palaces. A red carpet had been laid on the stair. There is a lift service, with a male operator and a female operator in separate booths. I am staying in Room No. 354. All the journalists are staying on the same floor. There is a wide corridor between the rows of rooms, covered with a red carpet. Our Hotels Intercontinental are not a patch on Peking Hotel. It is very chilly outside but warm in the room, because the hotel is centrally heated. There is an antique high bedstead in every room besides a sofa set, a big almirah, a dressing and a writing table on which all the necessary writing material has been neatly arranged. A table diary also decorates the writing-table. There is a telephone by the bedside, and bedroom slippers. The floor is all wood, so that when you tread on it, you can hear it creak. The bath-room is large-sized with a bath-tub in it.

Peking Hotel is a nice, cosy place. I write down the date (January 31) in the table diary. We are going back the day after tomorrow. We had left for China at 6-00 a.m. according to Pakistan Standard Time and reached Peking at 2-00 p.m. according to the Peking Time. That makes a difference of three hours. It is 4-45 p.m. (Peking Time) or 1-45 p.m. (Pakistan Time). We haven't had any lunch. It was lunch hour according to Pakistan Time, but lunch hour was over according to Peking Time. Being ahead of time, we had had to go without lunch. Our tall and bespectacled interpreter, Mr. Liu, said that we handn't much time at our disposal; so we had better go to the shopping-centre in case we wanted to make any purchases. My foreign currency is in the custody of Mr. Iftikhar Yusuf of Quetta. I make a hectic search for him. He appears after a few moments and tells me that he has exchanged my American dollars for Chinese currency. I receive 52 yuan for 24 dollars. I take a cup of tea, put on my warm clothes and go out in the chilly weather. The shopping-centre is not far from the hotel, so I reach there by our car in no time. We have been dropped at "Friendship Stores". I see Pakistani journalists all over the place. There is only one interpreter, so he keeps flitting from one counter to another. I buy a cap like the one I saw Chinese comrades wearing. It will afford good protection against the chill. "Friendship Stores" are particularly meant for foreigners. That's why each article bears the price in English. The prices are fixed. You get a receipt for whatever you buy and pay at the counter. The man behind the counter

stamps the receipt which you have to produce to carry away the goods, which are tastefully packed for you. One sees fine cloth, jerseys, children's garments, crockery, prints of sceneries in abundance at the stores. One wants to go in for almost every item. But I am short of foreign exchange. The Pakistan Government has allowed only 24 dollars. We have to go back to our hotel at 6-30 p.m. because talks between the leaders of the two countries have been scheduled for 7-00 p.m. so we make our purchases in a hurry and return to our hotel by our motor-car.

We deposit the purchased stuff in our rooms and leave for the People's Great Hall. It is 6-45 p.m. The Great Hall is quite near Peking Hotel. I had seen photographs of the Hall and read an account by Ibn-i-Insha of how it came to be built. Still, the Great Hall remains a great wonder to me. When our motor-car took a turning at Tinin Min Square and stopped in front of the Great Hall, we were overwhelmed by the magnificent pillars, huge doors, countless series of stairs and floodlight. Soldiers of the People's Militia, armed with guns, had been posted at the doors. People were entering the Hall through the revolving door. I also went in, walked over a red carpet to a handful of Chinese men and women, dressed in white tunics and blue trousers, deposited my cap and overcoat with them and obtained my token and forgot the chilly weather outside. Then I walked over another red carpet to one of the halls of the building where talks between the leaders of the two countries were to take place. There were sofas all round. Members of the Chinese delegations had already arrived. Mr. Chou En-lai was sitting right in front and by his side, I could see the Foreign Minister and elder personalities of China, with drooping eye lids. There was a touch of silver in their hair and their eyes full of deep reflection. These are the brains, responsible for the survival and salvation of 80 crore people. They have produced a unique nation. Their faces are lined with the stories of the Long March.

One chapter of History is coming to a close.

A whole generation is slipping into old age. One of their comrades, Marshal Chen Yi, has gone to his eternal rest.

A new chapter of History is unfolding itself.'

A new generation has come forward, imbued with the same determination and courage and armed with the same ideology that characterised the heroes of the Long March.

One political epoch comes to an end on a note of victory; another begins. It is January 31 today. Twenty-one days later, the U.S. imperialism will arrive to do obeisance to China. It is solid testimony to the greatness of China that her greatest enemy is coming to meet her of his own accord. This is a victory of the 80 crore people of China, a victory of the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, a triumph of the Great Leader Mao Tse-tung's Thought.

The Great Hall personifies China's glory. I am standing near one of the doors of the Hall. I see in front of me a celebrated figure of the present century. On seeing our party, Comrade Chou En-lai walks over to us.

When the Premier learnt that we belonged to the fraternity of journalists, he once again shook hands with each one of us, and then he says: "Gentlemen! won't you take your seats?" It was earlier thought that the newsmen might not be asked to the talks, but now we have been allowed to be present during the parleys. And what is more, writing material and Jasmin tea have been laid out by our seats. This implies that we can take down notes of the proceedings over a cup of tea. The journalists take their seats. The Pakistan delegation has not arrived yet. It is past 7-00 p.m. But President Bhutto and members of his delegation arrive in a few moments. Premier Chou En-lai gets up to receive them, whereupon cameras go into action. A group photograph is to be taken separately. The Pressmen were being excluded from this photograph. But Mr. Chou En-lai asks them to join the party. It is a large group, consisting of at least 100 people. As I am looking for a place, I hear Mr. Bhutto's voice: "Mahmud Sham! come over quick." I am the last man to join the group. After the group photograph has been taken, Mr. Chou En-lai poses for another photograph in the company of Pakistani journalists. And now it is time for talks.

The Pakistan delegation includes Mr. K.M. Qaisar, Pakistan Ambassador in China, and another member of the Pakistani Embassy, Syed Abul Hasan, besides official and non-official members. The Chinese delegation is composed of Premier Chou En-lai; Vice-Chair-

man of the Military Commission; Deputy Prime Minister of the State Council; Commander of the Navy of the People's Liberation Army; Chief of Staff of the People's Liberation Army; Deputy Commander of the Air Force; Foreign Minister; Deputy Minister of Foreign Economic Relations; Deputy Director of the Asian Department of the Foreign Ministry; besides other members of the Foreign Ministry and the Army.

Mr. Chou En-lai opens the conversation. It is an informal talk. Premier Chou En-lai says: "We are grateful to Mr. Bhutto for visiting us in company with such a large delegation. Some of these Pakistani friends have already been to China, among others Air Marshal Rahim Khan, Lieutenant-General Gul Hasan and Mr. Sultan Mohammad Khan." The Chinese Prime Minister notices some vacant seats and asks the Pakistani guests to move forward. He then turns to Pakistani Pressmen: "The Press delegation is also fairly large. This shows that your President is a democratic President." President Bhutto says: "Mr. Prime Minister! I have a bone to pick with you. You haven't come to Pakistan for a long time now." Mr. Chou En-lai says:

"I do apologize to you. But I have been preoccupied with internal affairs. Of course, Air Marshal Rahim Khan, Lieutenant-General Gul Hasan and Mr. Sultan Mohammad Khan can legitimately complain that I didn't come to Pakistan at your invitation, although I visited Pakistan in the days of Ayub Khan but not during Yahya Khan's regime. I apologize to the people of Pakistan also for not being able to come. I hope they will forgive me. Actually, we have been preoccupied with the Proletarian Cultural Revolution."

President Bhutto expresses the hope on behalf of the people of Pakistan, that Premier Chou En-lai will be able to visit Pakistan in the near future. He adds that the people of Pakistan have been eagerly looking forward to welcoming the great Chinese leaders who have always stood by their side.

Premier Chou En-lai resumes conversation: "I last visited Pakistan in June, 1966. That was nearly six years ago. Pakistan is our friend and neighbour. I may not be able to visit far off countries, but I will surely tour those countries that are nearer. I once toured eleven countries at a stretch. But President Bhutto has made a

whirlwind tour of eight countries at one go and that is no small achievement." (Applause).

The Communist Premier of a Communist country goes on to say: "It augurs well that Muslim countries are coming closer together for the first time. They have, with one voice, condemned Indian aggression. The unity of the Muslim countries is much more significant than the alliance of Indian expansionists and Russian revisionists. Some countries have been according recognition to the so-called Bangladesh in clear violation of the United Nations resolution. But no Muslim country has done so. The Muslim countries have unanimously condemned Big Power and Indian expansionists. You have justice on your side, despite the fact that one part of your country has gone under alien occupation. I must tell you that the "People's Daily" has carried an editorial, on the occasion of the arrival of the Pakistan delegation, to the effect that no legal status should be given to the occupation of a part of your country by Indian expansionists. But Mr. Bhutto's speech was far more effective than this editorial, and we honour Mr. Bhutto's speech, saying that Pakistan exclusively relies on the support of its own people."

Mr. Bhutto, over a cup of Jasmin tea, says in reply: "This is not my first visit to China. I visited your country for the first time ten years ago, when our two countries signed the Border Agreement. But every time I visited China, our country was facing one crisis or another. But our present crisis is the gravest in history. And we need the support of the entire world, particularly friendly countries, in achieving our basic objectives. I am happy that the countries of the Third World are on our side. We have maintained friendship with our neighbouring countries, but we have failed to establish friendly relations with India despite our best efforts. China is also our neighbour and we have had the best of relations with this great country. We are deeply grateful to China for her support to Pakistan. The fact is that China's assistance has always been based on principles. We, too, have never gone against principles. I have come to China again to explore possibilities of further strengthening the relations between China and Pakistan. We want to have neighbourly relations with India too, if only she would respect international principles, will not undermine the security of neighbouring countries and will refrain from aggression. Granted that Pakistan has

been defeated militarily and India has imposed her decision on us; nevertheless, I am sure, our people have a bright future. We are striving to save our life. There is no reason why we shouldn't be victorious in the long run with our people's support and international goodwill."

Mr. Chou En-lai says: "Your cause is, no doubt, a just cause. Your future will not belie your aspirations. Difficulties there would surely be, but they would vanish eventually. You have all the sympathies of the people and the Government of China. Difficulties put nations to the test. I am sanguine that you will achieve your goal with the help of your people."

The Chinese Premier continues: "The present situation in South-East Asia is the creation of British imperialism. Britain has played a dirty game in the United Nations too. On the one hand, the British Commonwealth Secretary came all the way from London to Rawalpindi and, on the other, Britain recognised Bangladesh. Pakistan has made a great achievement by dissociating from the Commonwealth. The British Commonwealth created disruption in Singapore and overthrew the Government in Uganda. Pakistan's exit from the Commenwealth marks the beginning of the end of the latter. I am sure, Pakistanis will not be the losers for this dissociation. The countries of the subcontinent must coexist, as a matter of principle, in amity and peace. The fact is that British imperialism has made sure that trouble should be kept brewing everywhere. As we have said before, the fall of Dacca is no victory for India; it marks the beginning of her troubles. And you are following a course that will hasten her misfortune. The Pakistani people can take legitimate pride in the fact that the great responsiblity of reconstructing Pakistan rests on their shoulders." Then facing Pakistani journalists, the Chinese Prime Minister adds: "The Indian Premier's father, the late Mr. Nehru, says in his book "The Discovery of India" that India has a right to a privileged position among the Indian Ocean countries. Well, Nehru failed to establish India's hegemony, but his daughter, the present Indian Prime Minister, is translating his dreams into practice. As a matter of fact, some people have even gone to the length of offering the crown to Indira Gandhi. This news was carried not by the Chinese but by the Indian Press. Perhaps, Indira Gandhi is coveting Queen Victoria's crown. But times have changed and her

cherished desire is not destined to be fulfilled." Mr. Chou En-lai now addresses Pakistani journalists and asks: "Am I right, gentlemen of the Press?" And we say with one voice: "Perfectly, Sir!"

Mr. Chou En-lai goes on with his speech: "The most important thing at the moment is to maintain peace in South-East Asia. We have just now heard the sad news that our friend, the King of Nepal, has passed away. He was, beyond doubt, a very good friend of ours. Nepal's neighbouring country might be tempted to take advantage of the vacuum created by the King's death and entertain expansionist designs, but it will meet with no success. Because the people everywhere are invincible."

The Chinese Prime Minister feels sorry that China had not been able to render as much aid as it should have to Pakistan in time of her need. He said that Chairman Mao Tse-tung was all for helping smaller countries but, he added, China believed in giving military aid, so that the recipients of aid should be able to fight foreign aggression. He said that China was opposed to providing aid for suppressing the common people in any country.

The Chinese Premier added: "We always give interest-free loans. And we should like to discuss this subject with you. It is in fact our declared policy not to claim any interest on the loans advanced by us. We are prepared to extend the period of repayment. stipulated initially. Interest-free loans are repayable in ten years. But if the recipient is in difficulties, the period can be extended by ten years and then by another ten, going up to the 21st century. Such loans can be given as a donation as well, but that I suppose would injure the self-respect of the receiving country. We advance loans to help the recipients to achieve self-sufficiency and gain confidence. We are sincere people, no card-sharpers. We have come as far as the middle of the seventh decade of the 20th century by our own concerted efforts. We advance loans to foreign countries in order to help them fight external aggression, and we are opposed to those who violate this principle. I must, however, add that our aid will be limited even on this occasion." Then, addressing the Pressmen, he said: "I Hope you gentlemen will not give an exaggerated account of what I am saying."

It was now Mr. Bhutto's turn to speak and he said: "China has given us a lot. We are, indeed, much beholden to her. We have come here to register our gratitude. When I was in Libya and discussing all manner of things with the President of that country, he asked me: "Please let me know frankly whatever Pakistan wants. To which I told him that we had gone to Libya to thank her and that we were a self-respecting nation and wouldn't like to become a burden for our friends. China has given us enormous moral aid, and now our relations with China stand fortified at the level of the people of the two countries."

Mr. Chou En-lai said: "Please forgive me for interrupting. But I must say that aid is always reciprocal. Your moral and material support has been very useful to us. As against India which took up arms against us, Pakistan settled the border dispute in an amicable way and signed the border agreement. It is a pity that Chen Yi who signed the agreement on behalf of China, is no longer with us. Then we have made good use of the Silk Route and the air link provided by you. And last but not least, Mr. Bhutto and Begum Bhutto have played a very important role in the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Iran."

It was going on for 8-15, and Mr. Bhutto was to have a special meeting with Mr. Chou En-lai. He told the Chinese Premier that some non-official members had also come with him. So he began introducing Mahmud Ali, President's Adviser on Political Affairs, the Khan of Kalat, Khair Bakhsh Mari, Khursheed Hasan Mir, Saifur Rahman Kayani and Col. Habib to Mr. Chou En-lai. When Faiz Ahmad Faiz was introduced to the Chinese Premier, he said that he was familiar with the name of Faiz and asked to be photographed with Faiz standing by his side. The introduction over, the official delegation went to an adjoining hall; and the non-official members of the delegation and the Press party were asked if they would like to see a film which was to be shown in their honour. Some of the journalists went away to prepare their Press reports. But I decided that I should see the film because I wouldn't be late in filing my story even after the film show, considering that although it was 8-30 p.m. according to Peking Time, it was only 5-30 p.m. according to the time in Rawalpindi.

Those who saw the film included the first lady of Pakistan; wife of Air Marshal Rahim Khan; Mahmud Ali and members of the

staff of the Commander-in-Chief. The film ran for two hours. I had seen some parts of this film at a function of the Chinese Consulate in Karachi and a print of the film had also been released on Karachi Television. But this time we saw a full version of the film. Each one of us was given an interpreter to explain the film to us. The picture revolved round the miserable life of a woman. In fact, it told the story of the awakening of China: how those in power subjected the poor people of China to untold atrocities and how in the long run the usurpers, the feudal lords and big zamindars were overthrown and the poor tillers of the soil won their rights.

Begum Bhutto is all praise for the film on leaving the auditorium. We all come out of the Great Hall and notice a blue motor-car flying the national flags of China and Pakistan. This indicates that the talks are still going on between the two leaders. I am the only one left who has to go to Peking Hotel. All the other guests have already departed. I get into a motor-car and proceed to the Hotel. I go up to the third floor but I can't locate my room No. 354. Since I don't know any Chinese, I rely on the fingers of my hand and a Chinese comrade at once understands which room I am looking for, after I raise three, five and four fingers consecutively. It is midnight according to Peking Time. It would be 9-00 p.m. in Karachi. I had already skipped my lunch. I wonder if I can have any dinner at this late hour. I contact Mr. Muhammad Husain of the Pakistan Embassy who has set up his office in one of the rooms of the hotel. He tells me that dinner can be arranged for. He requests a Chinese host to let me have something to eat and a sumptuous dinner is laid out in no time. The courses consist of cold beef, eggs, fish, rice and a sweet dish. The Chinese believe in lavish hospitality. There is so much to eat. I now go over to Ashab Naqvi's room and hear the clatter of typewriters. Iftikhar Chaudhri of A.P.P. seems to be the busiest person. Newspaper correspondents are happy that representatives of A.P.P. and P.P.I. are going to send detailed stories; so there will be less work for the correspondents. Absar Rizvi of P.P.I. is also very busy typing his story. Dispatches are being sent through the Telegraph Office downstairs. S.K. Pasha is also sending a telegram. He has booked a telehphone call for Karachi. Khursheed Hasan Mir is also busy. This is our first night in Peking. There is no knowing when I will come here again. Anyway I make myself comfortable in my luxurious bed.

I get up at 7-30 in the morning and get ready to see the Palace Museum; while Mr. Bhutto will have talks with Mr. Chou En-lai, we will go round the Museum. I have got hold of Ahfazur Rahman's telephone number and I ring him up. A female voice at the other end tells me that Ahfaz will ring me back. I give her my extension number, and presently I hear Ahfaz speaking over the telephone. He is surprised to learn that I am in Peking. In fact, he is delighted. He asks me how I am going to spend my time. His hostel is a good distance off. He will take about half an hour to get to Peking Hotel. In the meantime, I go downstairs to the dining-hall to have my breakfast. Ahfaz arrives shortly afterwards. When I finish my breakfast, I find that the party is about to leave for the Palace Museum. Mr. Liu and Mr. Chen have been looking for us. Ahfaz is accompanied by Hamid Hashimi who works on the "China Pictorial". Palace Museum was at one time a "forbidden place", but now it is no longer out of bounds for foreigners or the Chinese themselves. Our motor-cars enter the gate of the snow-covered palace. There was a time when Emperors lived here. Now, there are only relics of those days. The monarchies have come to an end. Now, the common people rule everywhere. They are the owners of all they survey. The guards on either side of the road are drawn from the Chinese People's Liberation Army. It is snowing still. Begum Bhutto has not yet arrived. We seek refuge from the rain and snow. We are feeling very cold. We are waiting for Begum Bhutto. We are supposed to go round the Museum when she arrives.

Begum Bhutto arrives, accompanied by the wife of the Pakistan Ambassador in China. She is quite aged and has been in China for quite some time, but her stay here has by no means affected her mode of dress. Her hair-do is most modern; she is wearing a gorgeous 'Saree' and she has dyed her eyelashes with mascara. We also learn that although this lady is the wife of the Ambassador of China's friend, Pakistan, she makes it a point to be present at the functions of embassies of Western countries, and thereby brings a 'good' name to Pakistan. As against her, we found Begum Air Marshal Rahim Khan to be the very embodiment of simple living and not at all prone to the vagaries of fashion.

It was still snowing when Begum Bhutto entered the Museum. We are accompanied by the Khan of Kalat, Makhdum Talibul Maula,

Khursheed Hasan Mir, Khair Bakhsh Mari, Saifur Rahman Kayani and Press representatives. The party was escorted by a Chinese Protocol official of the rank of Deputy Minister. There were two lady interpreters who knew both English and Urdu. Most of the rare relics on view in the Museum had been excavated during the Proletarian Cultural Revolution, and threw light on the ancient history of China and how Kings and Emperors exploited the poor masses. The exhibits, including liquid and dry measures and wine-glasses, bore the imprint of Irani culture. Most of the exhibits were utensils, pots and pans. They were neatly arranged in glass show-cases. We also saw the mummy of a King, complete with armour, and the princely costume embroidered in gold thread. The mummy looked majestic.

And here is an assortment of glasses and goblets. Here is a big kettle. Some of the relics date back to 1000 or 2000 B.C., some of them belong to the period after Christ. The Chinese hosts are busy narrating the history of these antiques. The Chinese have excavated many ancient cities and places during the days of the Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The dolls, knives and forks, lamps and utensils reflect the culture of olden days and speak volumes for the painstaking excavation of Chinese comrades. We also see some old coins. Since we don't have much time at our disposal, we have a hurried look at the exhibits. As we come out of this section of the Museum, we are taken to a drawing-room by our hosts and refresh ourselves with Jasmin tea. Soon after, we go round another section of the Museum, which displays exhibits of a smaller size, mostly utensils and some chessboards among many other things. There was a time when monarchs went out for a promenade within these precincts. We see statues of lions, tigers, dragons. Perhaps ancient kings were more fond of animals than humans or held dear those men who behaved like tame animals.

When we came out of the Museum, the snowfall had slowed down. There was bright sunshine all over the "Forbidden City." We got into our "Shanghai" which was going full speed. Our Chinese driver was driving the car with confidence and had a cheerful countenance.

I return to Peking Hotel and then go to Ahfazur Rahman's hostel by his taxi. On our way we stopped at Tinin Min square for a while to take in the splendid view. Many Chinese Comrades are sitting on

the Square steps and basking in the sunshine. On one side of the Square is the Great Hall, on the other is the famous Balcony from where Mao Tse-tung takes the salute. It is a spacious square. Until yesterday, I had only seen photographs and films of this square. Now I view it with my own eyes. This is truly the most important square of modern times, where history is being created. By the side of the Great Hall, innumerable Chinese, who have come from far and near are posing for photographs. Hundreds of workers are busy clearing the streets of snow.

We are now proceeding to the Government Friendship Hostel. On our way, we come across a lofty building marked with giant red letters from top to bottom. It is a multi-storeyed mansion. Ahfaz tell me that this building contains the offices and studios of Radio Peking. It is a huge building, many times the size of any one of the establishments of Radio Pakistan. Radio Peking is on the air round the clock and broadcasts programmes in all the languages of the world. Some of the programmes last for several hours. As I am having a good look at the imposing building, I hear in imagination the voice of a lady announcer: "This is Radio Peking. This is Radio Peking. This is Radio Peking."

We go past Radio Peking. We have come out of the City. The road is lined with bare trees. The entire landscape is covered with snow. The Friendship Hostel is still a good distance from where we are. We eventually reach the Hostel. The building looks like a satellite town. The building has many blocks and multi-storeyed flats. People of various nationalities live here—Pakistanis, Arabs, Africans, Asians. There are also students who have come from foreign countries to receive instruction in various disciplines. Some of them have come over to translate Chinese works into foreign languages. There are some foreign countries which are under the heel of anti-people forces, and some of their young revolutionary nationals are staying in exile at the Friendship Hostel. They are carrying on their freedom-struggle, sitting far away from their own land. Ahfaz is fondling a pretty child wearing warm clothes. The boy looks very sweet. He seems to be quite familiar with Ahfaz. The parents of the child hail from Brazil. His father is a revolutionary in exile. I see a Snow Man in front of the block where Ahfaz lives. It is the handiwork of some little children. And here is a gentleman from Sudan. This

comrade is working on some translation into Arabic. He is staying here with his family. Before him, the revolutionary poet of Sudan, Ahmad Muhammad Khair, stayed for a long while at this hostel as an exile. He has gone back. Although his freedom-struggle hasn't achieved complete success, prospects of liberation in his country are much brighter now.

We go up the stairs and come to Ahfazur Rahman's flat. The flats are beautiful. Each flat has a well-ventilated separate drawing-room, bedroom and kitchen and a telephone. The floors of the flats are made of wood. I stay for a while and then leave after taking charge of some of the things Ahfaz wants to be delivered to his people in Pakistan. As I come out of the hostel, I bump into two representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Their eyes are full of lustre. When they learn that I am associated with "Al-Fatah", they come closer to me. We pray for the glory of Palestine and Pakistan. Ahfaz goes to an office in the hostel, pays five and a half yuans (11 rupees) obtains a receipt and we board a taxi. This is the normal taxi-fare whether you hire the taxi for an hour or the whole day.

Since I have some leisure today, I go out, in company with Ahfaz, to do some shopping. We first go to the Friendship Store and I buy some satin fabrics and some lengths of raw silk. I also buy some Mao Tse-tung badges, sweaters, children's garments and sundry other things all of which reflect high Chinese skill and craftsmanship. There is no black market here, no overcharging, and all goods are genuine.

Our aircraft crew are also busy shopping. The Air Hostesses have laid aside their uniform for the time being and are wearing colourful sarees or bell bottoms. Another Friendship Store is selling wall sceneries, pictures and toys. Yet another deals in carpets and crockery. We have neither the time nor the money, otherwise every article is so attractive and reasonably priced that one would like to go in for it. There are boys, girls, old men waiting to serve you. Select the articles and they will nicely pack them for you and give you a receipt. Produce the receipt at the counter, pay for the goods and take them away. We were slightly delayed at one of the Friendship Stores because the electric wiring was being repaired.

Thereafter, we returned to our hotel. There was a message for us to the effect that we were supposed to go to see the Secretary of the Afro-Asian Journalists Association, Mr. Jomoto. We had earlier rung up the Secretariat of the Association and contacted our Sudanese friend. This message was in response to our inquiry. I had a late lunch and got ready to go over to Mr. Jomoto. He was at one time Indonesia's Ambassador to China but ever since Soekarno's downfall, he has been living in Peking in exile. The Chinese authorities still treat him like an accredited diplomat and allow him all the diplomatic privileges. He has been given a big house to live in. Mr. Saeed of Tanzania was also present at the meeting. He started discussing the state of journalism in Pakistan and particularly inquired after Mr. Minhaj Barna's welfare. I told him that journalism in Pakistan was under the monopoly of capitalists. Nevertheless, the journalists were carrying on a relentless struggle to win their rights. They had already won on one front. All the journalists who had been thrown out during the strike of 1970, had gone back to work. Mr. Minhaj Burna had gone back to "The Pakistan Times". Mr. Jomoto asked how "Al-Fatah" was faring. In the meantime, one of his comrades brought over a two week old number of the journal. Mr. Jomoto has been receiving "Al-Fatah" regularly but it is of no use to him because he doesn't know Urdu. So, he suggests that it would not be a bad idea to supply an English translation of some of its more important contents. I couldn't have a detailed talk with him because I was hard up for time.

We have to attend a dinner tonight which has been arranged by Premier Chou En-lai in honour of President Bhutto. As I said good-bye to Mr. Jomoto he came out to see me off along with some of his friends and I regarded this as reflecting his goodwill for the common people of Pakistan. Then rode through the interior of Peking, through narrow lanes with small dwellings on either side of me. I saw familiar Asian scenes—little children playing on the streets, small shops selling their merchandise. This was the real proletarian Peking. I had now returned to my hotel.

Mr. Chou En-lai is hosting a dinner tonight in honour of the Pakistan delagation in the Great Hall. He is a world figure of great stature. This dinner is an historical event indeed. I regard it as a great moment in my life to be invited to this function. I get into my car No. 5 and reach the Great Hall via Tinin Min Square. I came here.

yesterday too. But I notice even a more elaborate illumination today. I again start turning the pages of history. The Square is 500 feet across. In front of it stands the Great Hall which is the object of the veneration of every Chinese. This grand monument is a symbol of China's greatness and admirable architectural proportion and simplicity. The 1100-foot high building is supported by ten magnificent pillars. One cannot help bowing one's head in homage to the great workers who built this Hall without the help of any cranes or other machinery but their ambition and determination were higher than the pillars. We leave our overcoats and caps on the hat-rack and go towards the dining-hall on the first floor. As I enter the vast Hall, I feel so insignificant. There is enough room in this Hall for five thousand persons to sit down to dinner. There are eight seats at every round dining-table and the tables are four and a half feet apart. There is a vast array of glasses, plates and serviettes on the tables. The table reserved for President Bhutto and Mr. Chou En-lai is very large. The Pakistan and Chinese national flags decorate a screen. There is an orchestra in the rear, and drinks have been laid out in one corner of the Hall. Many foreign Ambassadors to China are present on the occasion. There are balconies on either side of the Hall. The Hall has an automatic lighting arrangement, so that the T.V. people and cameramen don't have to use their own flash-lights. President Bhutto and Mr. Chou En-lai are about to arrive; the diplomats, therefore, line up. On arrival, President Bhutto and the Chinese Premier exchange greetings with the diplomats and I run up to Prince Sihanouk and make an appointment with him for the following day.

A little later, we occupy our seats. Our Chinese interpreter tells us that it is going to be an 18-course dinner. Drinks are served before each course. There is so much to eat; several boiled vegetable dishes, prawns, fish, Peking duck, beans, rice dishes, cold beef, chicken, and what-not. After I finish the third course, I have no appetite for any more courses, but my interpreter insists that I should try some more dishes, because they are Chinese specialities. Mr. Zubairi of the "Business Recorder" is the first to give up. Mr. Ahmad Ali Khan follows. In fact, none of us feels equal to all the 18 courses. The Chinese orchestra has been playing constantly.

Mr. Chou En-lai stands up to deliver his after-dinner speech. He calls Mr. Bhutto a trusted and tried friend. He heartily welcomes

President Bhutto on behalf of Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese people. During his speech he supports Pakistan's stand even more vehemently than Pakistan herself. He refers to the U.N. resolution and talks of regional autonomy and national integrity. He repeats his earlier statement that the fall of Dacca is no milestone of India's victory but the starting point of her defeat. In the end, the Chinese Premier says: "I am confident that the people of Pakistan will strengthen their unity and overcome their temporary difficulties and win their final battle by constant effort under the leadership of President Bhutto."

Mr. Chou En-lai now proposes a toast to President Bhutto and then goes round wishing each members of the Pakistan official delegation.

Mr. Bhutto gets up to reply to Mr. Chou En-lai's speech. Dressed in a suit of Chinese cut, Mr. Bhutto looks even more like a statesman. One notices a certain reserve of sentiment in his speech tonight. The Chinese Premier has read a prepared speech. Mr. Bhutto is speaking extempore. He says that the friendship between China and Pakistan has stood the test of time. He says: "In 1965, we repelled armed aggression with world support, in general, and with Chinese assistance, in particular. But this time, the conspiracy against our regional integrity and autonomy was deeper and more widespread. That is why we have had to suffer a dreadful military defeat. The people of Pakistan are themselves prepared to solve their problems. Therefore, it seems only proper to leave the solution of problems to the people and leaders of the country's both Wings." When Mr. Bhutto refers to the U.N., he chokes with emotion, and he quotes one of Mao Tse-tung's saying: "Sometimes, there is an easterly and sometimes, westerly wind." Mr. Bhutto adds: "At the moment, an unfavourable wind is blowing in my country, but a time will come when our people will, by their unity and determination and in the light of their history, surmount all obstacles. Our trip to China has proved to be constructive and fruitful and when we return from China tomorrow, we shall be back more determined to carry on our struggle." At the end of his speech, Mr. Bhutto proposes a toast to Mr. Chou En-lai and Prince Sihanouk. Then he goes round and greets each one of the 5000 guests. It is no easy task. This is more than the Chinese Premier had done. As soon as Mr. Bhutto resumes his seat, Mr. Chou En-lai again comes to the dais, makes a

The President, with Premier Chou En-Lai, waving to the crowds which lined the streets to bid farewell.







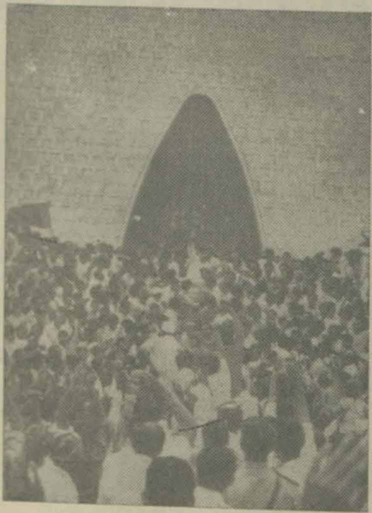
Crops damaged by floods: Mr. Bhutto in the interior of Sind.



"Hopes on rugged faces"; procession at Larkana.

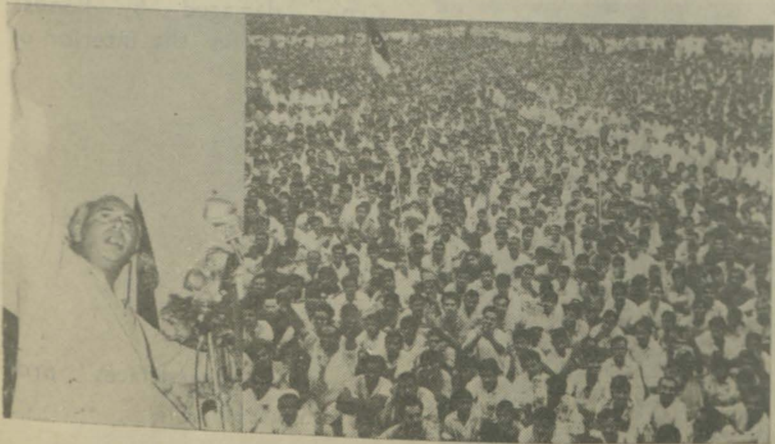


"The people are with us." Mr. Bhutto leading a procession in Lyari—which used to be a stronghold of rival political parties.



"Oh, Quaid! When will this long night of terror come to an end?"
Mr. Bhutto addressing a crowd outside the Quaid-i-Azam's Tomb on September 11, 1971, when he demanded the convening of the National Assembly by the end of the year, otherwise it would be too late. It was never convened.

"I may be arrested any moment". Addressing a mammoth public meeting at Liaquat Bagh, Rawalpindi.

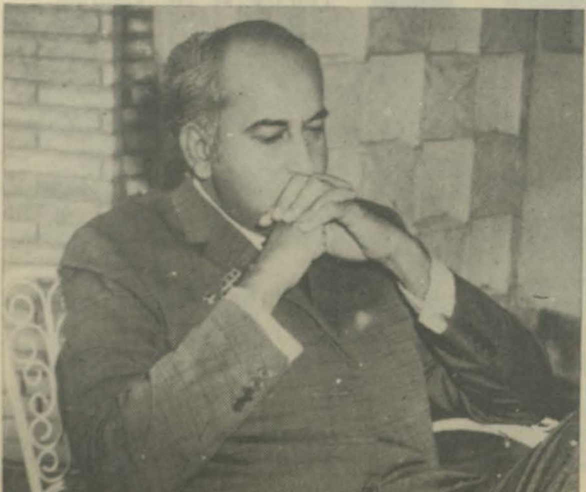




"All power is with the people". Mr. Bhutto (on the roof of the truck) taken in procession in Karachi.



Mr. Bhutto with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman disembarking from the Nabak launch.



Lost in memories of Soekarno: Mr. Bhutto during the interview with the Author.





Mr. Bhutto mobbed by the enthusiastic crowd which welcomed him at Dacca Airport on January 27, 1971.

A happy family group taken in Mr. Bhutto's Library at 70, Clifton, in 1969.



"Long live Pak-China Friendship". After Mr. Bhutto's successful visit to China in November, 1971, as Chairman PPP.



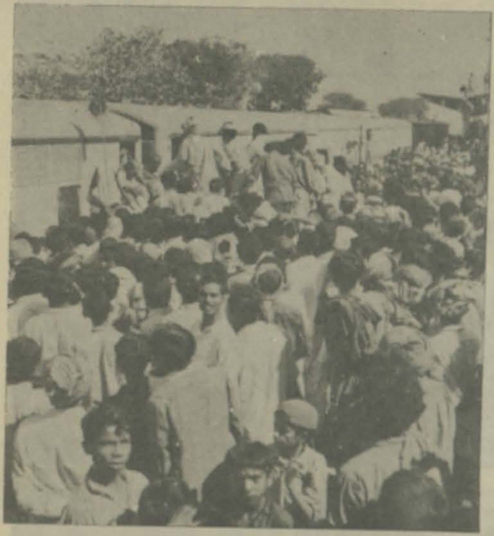
"Bhutto will not mislead the People." The Hala conference where the crucial decision to participate in the elections was taken.



Begum Bhutto Pakistani pressmen and Chinese friends in the old city of Peking.

"Our problems are the same, our exploiters are the same." Mr. Bhutto among the cyclone-affected people in Patuakhali. The cyclone was one of the biggest natural disasters in history.





"Victory is yours not mine". At Jang Shahi—a thanksgiving tour after victory in the election.



Pakistani journalists with a Chinese interpreter outside the Emperor's Palace in Peking.

"We are trying very hard to bridge the gulf". Mr. Bhutto and Sheikh Mujib briefing pressmen : during their crucial negotiations in January 1971.



"Are you for one Pakistan?" "Ekta (one) Pakistan", the crowd responded outside Hotel Intercontinental, Dacca, in January, 1971.







"Books like 'Cardiospasm' must be written". Mr. Bhutto launched the Author's book of this name in 1970.

'When will this long night of terror, this general's rule come to an end?" Mr. Bhutto launching his book, "The Great Tragedy".



Mr. Bhutto offering Eid prayers at his ancestral village, Noudero



Chairman Bhutto meets Chairman Mao

Prime Minister of Pakistan with Chairman Mao-tze Tung and Prime Minister Chou En-Lai.

A rare moment of relaxation: A game of billiards.



speech in honour of Prince Sihanouk, proposes a toast to him and announces that the tunes so far played by the orchestra had been composed by Prince Sihanouk and asks the orchestra to play them all over again. So, the tunes are heard once more. Mr. Chou En-lai walks up to Prince Sihanouk and drinks to his health. Prince Sihanouk now comes over to the stage to make a speech. Prince Sihanouk's country, Cambodia, had been over run by American agents but he has been heading the Government of Cambodia in exile in China and has got three-fourths of his country liberated.

Prince Sihanouk says: "I am extremely grateful to Mr. Chou En-lai for doing me and the people of Cambodia this great honour. Our people are at war with American imperialism which has usurped our independence, destroyed our regional autonomy and struck a blow to our national integrity, and which is dead set against people who are in the forefront of the brave struggle of the Third World against imperialism, aggression, Colonialism and injustice. Cambodia is a very small country. Some people think that we are weak. No, we are not weak, even though ours is a small country. Our country stands united; we are the only neutral country of the Third World which has spurned American aid. And America has not forgiven Cambodia or Sihanouk for this. Pakistan and Cambodia face similar problems. Cambodia has also been dismembered like Pakistan. But these countries are going to win in the long run." Prince Sihanouk also pays tribute to President Bhutto.

The dinner comes to an end with the playing of the National Anthems of China and Pakistan. Negotiations between the two leaders start again. A final shape has to be given to the draft relating to the negotiations. Those who wish to see the Great Hall are asked to get together. Begum Bhutto and the non-official members of the Pakistan delegation are also coming with us. The Great Hall is a magnificent, floodlit, place. We now reach its auditorium which can seat 5000 persons. There is an earphone beside every seat through which one can hear proceedings of the functions in the auditorium in twelve different languages. Our hosts feel sorry that they have not been able to stage a ballet for us for want of time. We pass through many verandahs and corridors and come to another hall whose walls are hung with large-sized sceneries which have been executed by Chinese artists. Pictures of various kinds have been

woven into carpets and drawn on plastic 'canvas'. Here is a portrait of the great leader of Asia, indeed of the whole world, Mao Tse-tung, in the company of his comrades. It has many dimensions and you can have a full view of it wherever you stand. This portrait reflects the artistic excellence of the Chinese and their deep sincerity. Now we see a representation of a village on a large screen. In the middle of it can be seen Mao Tse-tung's humble dwelling. This is the birthplace of the Father of the great nation of 80 crore comrades. Here is another large painting inscribed with some words in Chinese. Our lady interpreter tells us that the writing represents one of the sayings of Mao Tse-tung which means: "A tiny spark can set a whole jungle on fire."

The Great Hall is a symbol of the self-reliance of the Chinese and their aesthetic taste. The pillars, balconies, ceilings, stairs, carpets, speak for the artistic taste of the Chinese nation. We are coming out of the Great Hall. It is cold as before. When we reach Peking Hotel, we feel warm, because the place is centrally heated. Newspaper correspondents are getting down to writing their dispatches. Our last night in Peking is over. Early in the morning, we have been asked to pack up our luggage, which we are told, will be transported to the airport by our hosts. I have to call on Prince Sihanouk today. Ashab Naqvi is going to accompany me. We are informed by a Chinese interpreter that a motor-car is waiting downstairs to take us to the President of Cambodia.

The interview with Prince Sihanouk over, we return to the Great Hall to attend President Bhutto's luncheon-party in honour of Premier Chou En-lai. The guests are fewer today. Lunch is going to be served in the same hall where President Bhutto and Premier Chou En-lai had held their parleys. The lunch is being hosted by the President of Pakistan but the dishes are Chinese, with the difference that 'Chapatis' are also on the menu. The guests have started eating and soon it will be time for speeches. The notable guests include Premier Chou En-lai and other Chinese dignitaries; Prince Sihanouk, President of Cambodia and his wife; Prime Minister of Cambodia and his wife; Foreign Minister of Cambodia and his wife; Ambassador of North Korea to China and his wife; Ambassador of Cambodia to China and the Charge d'Affaires of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

President Bhutto stands up to speak. He says: "We have had very useful talks with the Chinese leaders during our stay in China. We are going back with the feeling that we enjoy full support of the Chinese nation under the able leadership of Chairman Mao Tse-tung and his illustrious colleagues. We are happy that we have unconditional support of the Chinese in our just struggle. We shall go on defending the dignity, honour and integrity of Pakistan until our very last breath. If we have faith in our objectives, these hard times will soon be over. We are going to work hard, we are not going to lay down arms until our countrymen are free and the rule of justice is established in Pakistan. The relations between Pakistan and China will become stronger and stronger with the passage of time, and the two countries will together strive to establish peace in Asia and the Third World."

Premier Chou En-lai says: "Although the visit of President Bhutto and other prominent Pakistan leaders has been rather short, the talks between Mao Tse-tung and his colleagues and the Pakistan delegation have been fruitful indeed, and there is complete understanding between the two countries over the situation in South-East Asia. We have discussed at length our mutual relations and questions relating to our mutual interest. Pakistan is a great country peopled by a great nation. The strength of the people of Pakistan against aggression is justified by all means. The Government and the people of China will continue to support Pakistan's struggle. We are convinced that a struggle in the cause of justice always bears fruit."

Mr. Bhutto now proposes a toast to Chairman Mao Tse-tung, Premier Chou En-lai and Prince Sihanouk, and then he goes to every table to have a word with the guests. As Mr. Bhutto approaches our table, he says: "I suppose you are enjoying yourself, Mahmud Sham!"

I voice my grouse that he had gone away to see Chairman Mao Tse-tung by himself.

"Oh, well", Mr. Bhutto replies: "There was no help for it. Even my son, Murtaza, was very cross with me because I didn't take him along. Believe me, there was a little 'revolution' in my family."

After Mr. Bhutto returns to his seat, Mr. Chou En-lai goes round, greeting the guests. He misses one table but presently goes over and proposes a toast to all those sitting at the table.

The joint draft relating to the talks is going to be signed soon. The draft has been under discussion until 3-00 a.m. last night and it has undergone several modifications. Pakistan wanted to call it "Joint Declaration", but China has thought it proper to give it the name of "Joint Communique". Mr. Bhutto and Mr. Chou En-lai have taken their seats at a table laid with a green table cloth. Members of the Chinese and Pakistan delegations stand behind their respective leaders. Both leaders carefully go through the communique before signing it. The documents then change hands and are signed again. There is loud clapping after the signing ceremony. The friendship between China and Pakistan has been further fortified.

The Pakistan Ambassador to China, Mr. K.M. Kaisar, takes possession of the pens used by President Bhutto and Mr. Chou En-lai while signing the communique, and offer them as a present to Begum Bhutto.

Our 48-hour stay in China has come to a close. We shall never forget the hospitality lavished on us by Chinese comrades. The memory of the Great Hall will ever remain fresh in our minds. We have no idea when we will come to China again.

We come out through the revolving door after putting on our caps and overcoats. The Tinin Min Square has been gorgeously decorated. It is resounding with music. We behold a colourful spectacle. The Chinese have come out in large numbers to give us a warm send-off. They couldn't give full vent to their sentiments on the day of our arrival because it was snowing heavily. But today they have more than made up for that. Contingents of the Chinese People's Liberation Army and the Armed Militia and countless young men and women, armed with guns, stand in impressive array. I am deeply moved by the endless friendliness of the Chinese comrades. Presently, an interpreter arrive and announces: "It is time to leave for the airport, Sir! Please get into your motor-cars." I go and occupy my seat in the red car bearing No. 5. The bands are playing Pakistani and Chinese tunes. Suddenly, there is a loud noise. I come out of my car and see President Bhutto and Premier Chou En-lai coming out of the Great Hall and thousands of people carrying the national flags of China and Pakistan, have burst into loud slogans in salutation to President Bhutto. Uproarious slogans are raised again by the multitude

wishing a pleasant journey to President Bhutto and his companions and eternal happiness to all of them, as President Bhutto and Premier Chou En-lai get into their car. It is a hoodless car and Mr. Bhutto, wearing a Chinese cap, and Premier Chou En-lai stand in full view of the crowds. Red banners are fluttering in the breeze. The loudspeakers are broadcasting Chinese and Pakistani melodies. Soon, the car carrying the two leaders is lost in a flood of colour. I go back to my motor-car. Ashab Naqvi is loading his camera. He has not been able to reach his own conveyance and comes over and sits by my side. We are now passing through a multitude of the sprucely dressed stalwarts of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, Armed Militia, Commanders and cheerful, smiling children, chanting President Bhutto's praises. The Shangan Highway has a festive look. On either side of us, uniformed boys and girls armed with guns and wearing folk costumes, break into a delightful dance. They are making their adieus to the departing guests, with garlands and bouquets in their hands. The smiles of the crowds reflect their deep goodwill for us. It has taken us almost three-quarters of an hour to traverse two and a half miles. Intermittently, the loud sound of "Long Live Bhutto!" reaches our ears. We have now left Peking City behind us and entered its suburbs.

Good-bye Peking and all the good things associated with you: I don't know how many times we will come here again and enjoy your lavish hospitality. We are still in search of our goal. Our people hold you very dear. They adore the people of China. They love their Chinese comrades from the core of their heart. But it is a pity that the people of Pakistan have not been able to order the affairs of their State. They have long been groaning under the yoke of unrepresentative rulers, absolute dictators, landlord politicians, exploiters and heartless capitalists. They have been the targets of American bullets and bullets flying from Chinese guns which had been supplied to our rulers to resist foreign aggression and not to be used against the helpless, unarmed, innocent Pakistanis. We have lost half our sacred land. A wide gulf has been created between our brothers, toiling men factory hands and peasants, but this is not our doing. It is indeed sad that we have not been able to organise our efforts and give them the right direction. We have had no revolutionary landowner so far to emulate the selflessness of the

great Chou En-lai. Our workers and peasants have not yet decided to take up arms. Our young ladies still prefer gaudy clothes to the uniforms of warriors.

Good-bye to you, O, snow-covered fields of China! I salute your brave workers.

We have now reached the airport. President Bhutto and Premier Chou En-lai are inspecting the Guard of Honour. The airport is thronged with countless Chinese who have come to wish us well and give us a warm send-off. I am making my way to our airliner but to tell you the truth, I don't feel like leaving after such a brief stay in China. But leave I must.

Ahfaz and Hashmi have reached the airport in the nick of time. We exchanged hurried embraces, and pose for a group photograph. Happy folks these two. They have been here for three years now and we have had to stay for only three days. We have a last-minute chat and don't want to part company so soon. The President of Pakistan is coming back after saying good-bye to his hosts. In the meantime, the Pakistan Foreign Secretary turns to me and says: "Aren't you coming with us. Please get into the plane. It is time to leave."

I go and take my seat in the aeroplane. It is cold inside. But no matter. The heating apparatus will be on soon.

We are leaving Peking. It is three o'clock according to Peking Time and 12 o'clock by Pakistan Standard Time. We have a journey of six hours and twenty minutes before us. While coming to Peking from Pakistan, the journey is covered sooner because of the tail wind. But when we return to Pakistan, we have have to face the wind blowing against the aircraft and that increases the flying time by an hour and a quarter.

My spirits are not as high as they were when I was going to China. The newspaper correspondents' main concern at the moment is to get hold of a copy of the joint communique in preparation for their reports. We are waiting for some briefing before we can give final touches to our dispatches. Presently the Secretary-General of the Foreign Ministry comes over to brief the journalists.

We reach Rawalpindi at nightfall. The Rawalpindi airport is not so well lit as the Karachi airport. We see a small group of people who have come to receive us during the dark of the night. I was surprised at this inadequate reception after such an important tour. Where are the common people? What has happened to the PPP workers? They ought to have given a better account of themselves. Of course, the Ministers and Government Advisers are in evidence.

This special aeroplane will now take off for Karachi. We, Karachi journalists, decide to travel to our destination by this very aeroplane. On my way to Karachi, I snatch a few moments of solitude and become immersed in thought. Suddenly I burst into verse and have, in no time, composed a little piece.

The air hostess announces that we are about to land at Karachi. The airport is deserted. There is no loader, no Customs man, because ours is not a scheduled flight. When we left for China, the following entry was made in my passport: "Departed from Islamabad Airport, Pakistan, on January 31." But no entry was made in our passport in China and none on our return to Pakistan. The flight was international as far as Rawalpindi, but we didn't get off at Rawalpindi. From Rawalpindi to Karachi, the flight was treated as inland. So we are still abroad according to our immigration papers.

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THE AUTHOR

The author is a distinguished Pakistani journalist. He has been in the profession for the last 15 years. He has a prominent position in the literary field and has published three poetic works: Cardio Spasm (a long poem), 'Akhri Raqs' and 'Chehra Chehra Mairi Kahani' (lyrics).

During the General Elections, he toured the Punjab and Sind with the People's Party Chairman, Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, now Prime Minister of Pakistan. After the elections, he covered for the 'Musawat' the negotiations between the People's Party Chairman and the then President of Pakistan, General Yahya Khan, and in Dacca the negotiations between Shaikh Mujibur Rahman and Mr. Bhutto.

Mr. Mahmud Sham, as a reporter, accompanied Prime Minister Bhutto on tours of China, the U.S.A., Russia, Rumania, France, India and Bangladesh. He has also visited Singapore, Britain, Denmark, Sweden, Syria and the Gulf States.

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